

Edited by Christopher R. Browne and Jeffrey M. Needell



# Maps of Memory

Trauma, Identity and Exile in Deportation  
Memoirs from the Balko States







# Maps of Memory



Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore



# Maps of Memory

Trauma, Identity and Exile  
in Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic States



Edited by  
Violeta DAVOLIŪTĖ  
Tomas BALKELIS

This edited volume is published as part of the Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Institute project entitled 'Maps of Memory: Transcription and Transference of the Experience of Displacement in the Memoirs of Deportation', and the Lithuanian Research Council's 'National Development Programme for Lithuanian Studies 2009–2015'

*Editors*

Violeta Davoliūtė  
Tomas Balkelis

*Reviewer*

Katherine Jolluck

*Designer*

Elona Marija Ložytė  
*Layout by*  
Grażina Kazlauskienė

*Photographs taken from*

the Archive of Genocide and Resistance  
Research Centre of Lithuania

© Tomas Balkelis, 2012

© Violeta Davoliūtė, 2012

© Elona Marija Ložytė, 2012

© Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 2012

ISBN 978-609-425-089-7



# Contents

Katherine Jolluck, Preface	7
Violeta Davoliūtė, Tomas Balkelis, Introduction	10

## TRANSCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF DISPLACEMENT

Aldis Purs, Official and Individual Perceptions: Squaring the History of the Soviet Deportations with the Circle of Testimony in Latvia	29
Tomas Balkelis, Ethnicity and Identity in the Memoirs of Lithuanian Children Deported to the Gulag	46
Dalia Leinartė, Lithuanian Women and Lithuanian Men in Soviet Exile: Living Through Trauma	72
Jerilyn Sambrooke, Narratives of Identity: A Postcolonial Rereading of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's <i>Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea</i>	90

## TRANSFERENCE OF TRAUMA AND THE MEMORY OF DEPORTATION

Violeta Davoliūtė, 'We Are All Deportees.' The Trauma of Displacement and the Consolidation of National Identity during the Popular Movement in Lithuania	107
Dovilė Budrytė, War, Deportation and Trauma in the Narratives of Former Women Resistance Fighters	137
Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, Hegemony or Legitimacy? Assembling Soviet Deportations in Lithuanian Museums	153
Aro Velmet, Breaking the Silences: Contradiction and Consistency in Representing Victimhood in Baltic Museums of Occupations	178
Modris Eksteins, Arturs: An Extract from <i>Walking Since Daybreak</i>	211
Julija Šukys, Trans-Siberia: Like Birds Returning Home	218
Index of Names	241



## Preface

The history of the Baltic States is not well known outside of the region itself. This holds true for the period of the Second World War and its aftermath, when the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia suffered multiple occupations, mass killing, large-scale deportations, and radical social transformation, resulting in multiple layers of trauma. This volume, published with the support of the Lithuanian Research Council, offers English-language readers up-to-date information and critical insight into one aspect of the wartime ordeals experienced by the people of these states – forced deportation by the Soviet regime. In two major episodes in 1941 and 1949 alone, approximately 145,000 people were torn from their homes, crowded into cattle cars, and deported into the depths of the Soviet Union. Sporadic deportations during the years of Stalin's domination of the Baltic States made that number even higher. During the Cold War Western publics knew little of these forced resettlements, and Western scholars, kept from the relevant archives and often seeing the postwar deportations as internal Soviet matters, paid them scant attention. Within the Soviet Baltic republics themselves, these episodes constituted taboo topics, discussed, if at all, in hushed tones in family circles only. Memorializing these repressions and their victims was out of the question; in fact, returning deportees were generally stigmatized by their own societies. As a result, memory of the deportations was suppressed and distorted.

This volume gives a critical account and analysis of the return of memory to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia that began with Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* in the late 1980s. In the Baltic region leaders and lay people began to recover deportation stories at that time. These stories played a critical role in forging unity against Soviet rule, and then became a

powerful source of identity for the newly independent states. In this heady period of *perestroika* and the establishment of independence, each of the Baltic States witnessed a rush to build museums documenting and honouring the deportees and to collect their accounts while the survivors were still alive.

Scholars, both within the Baltic region and without, have set about researching relevant archives, reading testimonies, interviewing former deportees, and examining the artefacts of memory that have been produced since the late 1980s. The present volume is the result of the collaboration of researchers from the Baltic States, Western Europe, Canada, and the United States. Hosted by the Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Institute and supported by the Lithuanian Research Council, this international group of scholars met at the Lithuanian Institute of Literature and Ethnography in Vilnius in October 2012 to discuss their work. As the reader will see, they have opened new avenues of research into the Baltic deportations, focusing, for example, on children and gender, comparing the experience cross-culturally, and delving into post-Soviet culture. They employ methodologies unknown in the region during the Soviet period, including social history, gender, and post-colonialism. In so doing, the book represents one of the first steps in bridging the gap between the study of the Gulag experience, in general, and that of the peoples in the Baltic region in particular, with broader developments in international scholarship. As such, it will appeal to a broad range of scholars, especially those studying war and occupation, displacement, memory and trauma, independence movements and nationalism, and post-Soviet culture.

Significantly, the scholars whose work is included in this volume study not just memoirs but memories, in various forms. In the words of the editors, they focus on the subjective experience, social impact and transmissibility of the trauma of deportations. Their research aims to help us understand the recollections of the past that form the heart of the national narratives in the Baltic States today. Together, these contributors show us an underlying diversity in the experience of deportation that is often overlooked, and demonstrate that official and popular (and sometimes individual) representations of the deportations to the USSR are quite often idealized. They thus try to understand not only the subjective experience, but the way it functions in collective national memory.

The Soviet deportations profoundly affected the societies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Yet they constituted just one of multiple, interrelated tragedies and displacements that befell the Baltics in the middle

of the twentieth century. Coming to terms with their own tribulations during the war, including their victimization at the hands of the Soviets, might facilitate their examination of other difficult wartime issues, including the killing of Jews in the Baltic region and collaboration. Such reckonings are necessary for understanding the cumulative effects of the violence and painful displacements that wracked the area. This volume, which illuminates the way the Soviet deportations helped to shape postwar and post-Soviet society in the Baltic States, contributes to that larger undertaking. Given that multiple traumas have and continue to effect societies across the globe, the book's relevance extends well beyond the region.

Katherine R. Jolluck  
Stanford University  
December 2012

## Introduction

The testimonies and memoirs written by those who survived deportation to the Gulag were avidly read during the time of the popular movements against Soviet rule throughout the Baltics. They were instrumental in the construction of a new national memory and post-Soviet identity in these societies. Nonetheless, after just a few years, when national consolidation and identity building took second place to issues of economic reform and development, these testimonies and memoirs very quickly dropped off the public agenda and are now of interest primarily to a small group of readers and specialists.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, this sizeable body of texts remains relatively under-studied, especially when compared to the extensive discussions and research on trauma and the representation of similar historical experiences in testimonial literature. Studies of Holocaust memory are by far the most developed and have long ago become interdisciplinary, drawing together scholars of literature, linguistics, history, psychology and philosophy, among other fields. They established the basis for a wide-ranging dialogue on issues of history, trauma, memory, textual representation, and the relationship between the individual and the community that have been extended and applied to testimonies arising from a wide range of historical contexts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aigi Raht-Tamm, 'Trėmimų tyrimai Estijoje: dabartinė padėtis ir perspektyvos' in *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, Nr. 2, Vol. 24 (2008), p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Saul Friedländer, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992); Michael F. Bernard-Donals, and Richard R. Glejzer, *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Zoë Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); R. C. Spargo and Robert M. Ehrenreich, *After Repre-*

The inspiration for this edited volume, which focuses on testimonies of deportation from the Baltic States, was born from a desire to bridge the divide – historical and methodological – that continues to separate studies of Gulag memory from broader developments in international scholarship built on the well-established tradition of testimonial studies. As Aleida Assmann and Sebastien Conrad have recently argued, ‘memory and the global have to be studied together, as it has become impossible to understand the trajectories of memory outside a global frame of reference.’<sup>3</sup>

In order to bridge the gap between studies of the memory of the Baltic deportations with broader developments of international scholarship, the contributors to this edited volume address three cross-disciplinary research themes: the experience of deportation; the transcription of the displaced self and identity into texts and other forms of representation; and the transference of trauma and the memory of deportation within and across communities and generations. But before discussing these themes through a description of the individual contributions, we would like to address briefly three key issues: a) the historical relationship between the Soviet deportations to the Gulag and the Holocaust; b) the methodological significance of Holocaust testimonies for the study of deportation memoirs; and c) major contributions to the field of deportation memory studies in the Baltic States.

## The Holocaust and the Gulag

This volume presumes that any discussion of Gulag memory in the Baltics must begin with a critical awareness of the tragedy of the Holocaust in the region. Here, the Holocaust was marked by its totality – the almost complete destruction of local Jewish communities by the Nazis and their local collaborators. More than 280,000 Jews perished between 1941 and 1945 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.<sup>4</sup> In Lithuania alone about 95 percent of the pre-war Jewish community was annihilated.

However, as with other nations of central and eastern Europe that suffered both Nazi and Soviet occupations, Estonians, Latvians

*sentation? The Holocaust, Literature, and Culture* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Jakob Lothe, Susan R. Suleiman, and James Phelan, *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Andrejs Plakans, *Historical Dictionary of Latvia* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008), p. 275; Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p. 135.

and Lithuanians have yet come to terms with the tragic legacy of those years. During the Soviet era, limitations on the freedom of speech and inquiry isolated the Baltics from the debates over the Holocaust and collaboration that took place in Germany, France, and other western European countries in the 1960s and 1970s. The specific character of the Holocaust as the genocide of the Jews was ignored. Memorials and monuments raised at mass killing sites generally noted the sacrifice made by 'Soviet citizens,' including at the Paneriai (Ponary) site near Vilnius, where some 70,000 Jews, 20,000 Poles and 8,000 Russians were killed. As a result, when the Baltic nations began to revise the official Soviet interpretation of the war and the postwar era after 1989, they focussed on their own suffering at the hands of the Communists.

At the same time, the post-Soviet years also marked the first time when the Holocaust received official recognition in the Baltics, and when the role of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in the Holocaust began to be debated among the broader public. Efforts at reconciliation were institutionalized in 1998, when the three Baltic presidents (Lennart Meri, Guntis Ulmanis and Valdas Adamkus) decided to establish state commissions on the crimes of the Soviet and Nazi regimes with mandates that include fact-finding, education and reconciliation.

The efforts of these commissions have met with mixed success and have developed (in cooperation with similar commissions from other countries in East Central Europe) a model for the promotion of a common European memory of WWII and its aftermath. The proposal to make 23 August, the day of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, an official European day to commemorate the victims of totalitarian regimes, is central to this conception. The idea gained ground and was included in a 2009 resolution of the European Parliament entitled 'On European Conscience and Totalitarianism.'<sup>5</sup>

Since then, however, only a few countries have adopted 23 August a national day of commemoration. Attempts to organize joint commemorations for the victims of the Holocaust and the Gulag have proven difficult to arrange in practice and have occasionally come under harsh criticism. The goal of fostering a common European memory of these historical traumas seems premature. As Irena Veisaitė, a renowned Jewish-Lithuanian theatre critic and Holocaust survivor argued in 2009, Lithuanians

<sup>5</sup> For the full text of the resolution see: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0213+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>. 19 December 2012.



need to achieve greater critical distance from the trauma of Soviet repression before they can engage in a real dialogue about the Holocaust.<sup>6</sup>

One of the key difficulties of coming to terms with the traumas of WWII and its aftermath in the region stems from the transformative effects that the displacement of war, occupation, resistance and repression had upon the complex, multi-layered societies in the region. The transformative processes of categorizing, separating, killing and moving people around had the effect of creating or consolidating collective subjectivities that recall 'the war' from the singular perspective of the traumatic events that led to their emergence.

And yet, as Jan T. Gross convincingly argued in *Neighbours*, the tendency of mainstream historiography of WWII to treat the Holocaust of the Jews and the history of the other people in Nazi-occupied states as two separate stories is untenable.<sup>7</sup> In the Baltics, there were clear linkages between the Nazi and Soviet policies that brought the genocide and mass displacement of various groups of population. The first Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in 1940 completely destroyed the fragile equilibrium between Jews and Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians and pitted these communities against each other.<sup>8</sup> The Holocaust was facilitated by the tensions produced by the Soviet regime during its terror and deportation campaigns of 1940–1941.

Moreover, the Soviet repressions targeted not only Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, but ethnic minorities in each of the Baltic States including Jews, Poles and others. According to one estimate, there were about 12,000 Jews deported by the Soviets from the Baltics in 1941.<sup>9</sup> Recognizing the historical relationship between the repressive policies of both totalitarian regimes is not intended to draw any equation between the distinct tragedies of the Holocaust and the Gulag. The first was a premeditated genocide, and the second was a highly repressive and often murderous system

<sup>6</sup> The argument was made during *22nd European Meeting of Cultural Journals* that took place in Vilnius on 8–11 May 2009. For its proceedings see: <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2009-05-20-summary-en.html>, 19 December 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Jan T. Gross, *Neighbours: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 7–8.

<sup>8</sup> For the connection between the Soviet policies of the occupation and the Holocaust see: Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003); Alfred Senn, *Lithuania 1940: Revolution from Above* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1940).

<sup>9</sup> Dov Levin, 'On the Relations of Baltic Peoples and their Jewish Neighbors before, during and after World War Two' in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 5, Nr. 1 (1990), p. 56.

of forced labour. Yet it is impossible to understand the trauma of Baltic societies in the cauldron of WWII without an awareness of both.

Beyond the clear need to account for the agency of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians in the Holocaust, one also needs to explain what effect the sudden absence of Jews had on the subsequent development of Soviet society in the Baltic States. In 1989, Gross wrote a pioneering article that showed how 'the immense population losses and shifts which occurred during the war and immediate post-war years had a profound impact on the process of consolidation and character of post-war regimes in East Central Europe'.<sup>10</sup> Since then, a number of studies have shown how the experience of mass population displacement, including the deportations as well as the displacement caused by the Holocaust, has had a deep effect on the subsequent development of the communities affected.<sup>11</sup>

The experience of mass population displacement during the twentieth century has left a tragic, indelible legacy, especially along the eastern borderlands of Europe that stretch into Russia. Caught in the vise of Nazi and Soviet power, this area bore the brunt of total war.<sup>12</sup> The devastation of multiple invasions and retreats, the genocide of the Jews, mass killings and forced migrations had a cumulative, transformative effect on the people of the region. In this corner of Europe, even the end of war brought little reprieve, but the redrawing of borders, massive population transfers, and the imposition of Communist regimes that lasted for decades.

The scale of war destruction in the Baltic States was on a par with other East European countries that suffered double occupation of the USSR and Nazi Germany. By mid-1945 the population of Latvia was reduced from a pre-war (1939) total of two million to about 1.4 million.<sup>13</sup> Between 1940 and 1953 at least 140,000 people were repressed including those who were

<sup>10</sup> Jan Gross, 'Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe,' *East European Politics and Societies* 3.2 (Spring 1989), pp. 198–214, at 203.

<sup>11</sup> See especially Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) and chapter 5 of his *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010); Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (eds.) *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001); Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds.), *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–1950* (Basingstoke, 2009); Alfred J. Reiber, *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939–1950* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Timothy Snyder argued, 'Hitler and Stalin rose to power in Berlin and Moscow, but their visions of transformation concerned above all the lands between.' Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, Basic Books, 2010), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Andrejs Plakans, *Latvians: A Short History* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1995), p. 152.

deported and imprisoned in Latvia.<sup>14</sup> As a result of World War Two and Soviet repressions, Lithuania lost almost a million people – about one third of its pre-war population.<sup>15</sup> Among the victims there were about 332,000 people deported and imprisoned by the Soviets during 1940–1958.<sup>16</sup> Estonia fared little better as it lost about 170,000 people (17.5 percent of the whole population) between 1939 and 1959.<sup>17</sup> Among them there were about 31,000 deportees.

As a growing body of literature attests, a rigorous focus on the causes, varieties and effects of displacement reveals important relationships among events, and has disclosed the significance of phenomena like ethnic cleansing, a newly-invented term that imparts a new sensitivity to the violence of forced migration.<sup>18</sup> The times are now gone when Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin could demand the uprooting of millions of families from their homes and call it an 'orderly and humane population transfer'.<sup>19</sup>

In his explanation for why forced deportation seldom occurs without murderous violence, Norman Naimark notes: 'People do not leave their homes on their own. They hold on to their land and their culture, which are interconnected. They resist deportation orders; they cling to their domiciles and their possessions; they find every possible way to avoid abandoning the place where their families have roots and their ancestors are buried'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the trauma of displacement has been shown in several studies of the region to have a profound effect on identity, both individual and collective.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Daina Bleiere (ed.) *History of Latvia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Riga: Jumava, 2006), p. 349; Valdis Lumans, *Latvia in World War Two* (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp. 398–399.

<sup>15</sup> This figure includes those who were killed, had to flee and were deported and imprisoned. See, Arvydas Anušauskas, *Teroras, 1940–1958* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2012), p. 280.

<sup>16</sup> Arvydas Anušauskas, *Teroras, 1940–1958* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2012), p. 280.

<sup>17</sup> Velo Salo (ed.) *The White Book: Losses Inflicted on the Estonian Nation by Occupation Regimes, 1940–1991* (Tallinn: Estonian Encyclopedia Publishers, 2005), p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944–1949* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) and chapter 5 of *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010); Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (eds.) *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001); Gatrell and N Baron (eds.), *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–1950* (Basingstoke, 2009); Alfred J. Reiber, *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939–1950* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> The reference is to the post-WWII transfer of 10–15 million ethnic Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia mandated by the victorious Allies in the *Agreements of the Berlin (Potsdam) Conference, July 17–August 2, 1945*.

<sup>20</sup> Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> See below 'Major Studies of Deportation Memory in the Baltics'.

The studies by Naimark, Snyder, and other Western scholars cited above have been enthusiastically received in East Central Europe as recognition of the traumatic experience they have suffered, and long sought to convey. As the Lithuanian poet Marcelijus Martinaitis wrote at the peak of the popular movement: 'In my life I saw abandoned homes three times. After the war, after the deportations, and after melioration... That is a lot for one lifetime... And I know one thing. When a home is abandoned, something has happened there: robbery, death. Nobody just leaves, or is forced to leave without a reason'.<sup>22</sup>

Recognizing the cardinal importance that the deportations to the Gulag had for the societies of the Baltic States, Peter Gatrell has nonetheless argued that a broader view that considers deportation together with other forms of displacement like collectivization, urbanization, mobilization and wartime refugee flows is essential to understanding the experience of the twentieth century in the Baltics.<sup>23</sup> Thus we are painfully aware that the Soviet deportations were only one form of population displacement in the Baltic region along with the Holocaust, forced expulsions, mobilisations, political arrests, population transfers, evacuations, collectivisation and hasty urbanisation.

### Methodological Contributions from Holocaust Studies

If the history of the deportations is inseparable from the history of the Holocaust, the study of Gulag memory stands to benefit from the highly developed methodologies that have emerged over the past few decades of scholarship on the memory of the Holocaust.

Perhaps the most significant legacy of Holocaust studies has been to establish the testimony of each individual as something worthy of study, reflection and analysis in its own right, and not simply as evidence of facts to be compiled into a coherent narrative by the historian.<sup>24</sup> The

<sup>22</sup> Marcelijus Martinaitis, 'Mūsų kaltųjų vieškeliai' ('The Paths of our Guilt') in *Literatūra ir menas*, 35 (27 August 1988), p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Gatrell, 'Population Displacement in the Baltic Region in the Twentieth Century: from 'Refugee Studies' to 'Refugee History'' in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 38.1 (2007), pp. 43–60. See also Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds), *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–50* (Basingstoke, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

current focus on the irreplaceable value of the experience of each individual is most vividly demonstrated by the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies project at Yale University. The project began in 1979 with the aim of recording the audio-visual testimony of individual survivors and succeeded in recording over four thousand such interviews by 2002.

The value of the individual's testimony has not always been held in such esteem. Indeed, the earliest histories of the Holocaust, written in the 1950s, displayed a clear bias against individual testimony that was typical of the positivism that dominated historical writing at the time. Tony Kushner's recent review of Holocaust representation notes that Leon Poliakov, author of *Harvest of Hate* (1956) wrote that 'wherever possible, to forestall objections, we have quoted the executioners rather than the victims'.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Gerard Reitlinger's pioneering overview of the Nazi policy of extermination (*The Final Solution*, 1953) deliberately avoided using the testimony of survivors because, as the author writes, they were 'seldom educated men'.<sup>26</sup>

Since then, however, innovations of historiographical method, such as the rise of oral history and micro-history have completely changed the approach to testimony. Just as importantly, the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 attracted international attention to the crimes of the Nazis, and brought the testimonies of Holocaust survivors to television viewers and newspaper readers across the globe.<sup>27</sup> The emphasis on the unique value of the testimony of Holocaust survivors peaked with the release of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, a nine-hour long film based exclusively on filmed oral testimony, consciously rejecting any archival footage or document as 'un savoir institutionnalis '.<sup>28</sup>

The unreliability of oral testimony in terms of ascertaining certain facts about the past is not ignored. Studies of the Yale archive of video testimonies have demonstrated that witnesses tend to conflate events and often include facts or images into their narratives that they heard, read or saw in films well after the event.<sup>29</sup> But the point is that such memoirs, which nonetheless convey a striking amount of precise details, have not only an informative function but a performative one as well.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Tony Kushner, 'Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation', *Poetics Today*, 27, 2 (2006), p. xiv.

<sup>26</sup> Kushner, 'Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation', p. 277.

<sup>27</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking, 1963).

<sup>28</sup> Claude Lanzmann 'Le lieu et la parole', *Cahiers du Cin ma*, 374 (July–August 1985), pp. 18–23, at 20.

<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Hartman, 'Learning from Survivors: The Yale Testimony Project', in Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 141.

<sup>30</sup> Geoffrey Hartman, *The Humanities of Testimony* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 254.

Testimony is thus seen to fulfil more than one function. On the one hand, the traumatized survivor tells his or her story to seek justice and perhaps recognition of his or her own experience. But they also are moved by the fear that when they die nobody else will remember what happened, and so they are moved to make testimony to transmit the memory of what happened to the next generation.

The intergenerational transmission of memory is closely related to the question of the transmissibility of trauma and the notion that memory is indexical and that what is transmitted cannot be the survivor's own historical and embodied memory. What passes from the persecuted generation to its children often has a traumatizing effect but precisely because it is at once emotionally charged and underspecified (deliberately vague or full of lacunae). A concept such as the later generation's 'absent' or 'post' memory not only acknowledges this but also evokes the pathos of a suffering that includes a sense of guilt for not having suffered. What is passed on can be described as a melancholy that must still be converted into a work of mourning appropriate to subsequent generations.

### Major Studies of Deportation Memory in the Baltics

While studies of Holocaust memory have generally led the field, this volume also draws closely from a number of important and innovative works focussed on the memory of the deportations in the Baltics. Vieda Skultans wrote one of the best-known works on the memory of the Gulag, based on hundreds of hours of interviews she took with Latvian deportees. Writing with a background in anthropology, Skultans brought a new level of insight into the analysis of the social function of deportee testimony, how it was not only the report of individual but of collective experience, based not only on personal experience but on stories heard from other deportees. Skultans discerned a specific feature of deportee memoirs, structured on the narrative of departure to the Gulag and return to the homeland, which privileged the role of place and displacement in the formation of identity.<sup>31</sup> More recently, Eva-Clarita Pettai has brought together several contributions addressing various aspects of deportation memory in the Baltics.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Vieda Skultans, *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> Eva-Clarita Pettai, *Memory and Pluralism in the Baltic States* (London: Routledge, 2011).

The work of Skultans has been influential in promoting the 'life stories' approach to memoirs of deportation, which sets the individual's memory and memoirs firmly in the social and intertextual context. Particularly in Estonia, this tradition has made a strong emphasis on questions of gender and women's life stories in the work of Leena Kurvet-Kaosaar, Marju Lauristin and Tina Kirss, for example.<sup>33</sup> A number of conferences organized in Estonia, including the Biennial Conference of the International Auto/Biography Association, have addressed the broad cultural and historical impact of the deportations on the peoples of the Baltic States through the prism of life writing.<sup>34</sup>

In Lithuania one of the most innovative studies in this direction is a collective volume edited by Danutė Gailienė on the psychological trauma of those who suffered political repressions which attempted to situate the deportation experiences within a transnational comparative framework of other victim groups.<sup>35</sup> Sociologist Irena Šutinienė explored the connections between biography writing and Soviet deportations.<sup>36</sup> Overall, in the last decade in Lithuania the most innovative research in the field was conducted under the auspices of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania.<sup>37</sup> Yet the dominant tendency in the field of Soviet deportations in the Baltic States still remains cataloguing the hardships of deportation and researching its organizational structures rather than studying the subjective experience, social impact and transmissibility of the trauma of deportations.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Tiina Kirss, Ene Kõresaar, and Marju Lauristin, *She Who Remembers Survives: Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2004); Leena Kurvet-Kaosaar, 'Imagining an Hospitable Community in the Deportation Narratives of Baltic Women', *Prose Studies*, 26, 1 (2003).

<sup>34</sup> Kristi Kukk, Toivo U. Raun, Alliki Arro, Madli Puhvel, and Lilian Puust, *Soviet Deportations in Estonia: Impact and Legacy: Articles and Life Histories* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2007); Leena Kurvet-Kaosaar, Piret Peiker, and Mari Peegel, *Trajectories of (Be)longing: Europe in Life Writing: Abstracts* (Tartu: Estonian Literary Museum, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Danutė Gailienė, *Sunkių traumų psichologija: politinių represijų padariniai* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Irena Šutinienė, 'Sovietinių represijų atminties reikšmė lietuvių autobiografijose' in *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, Nr. 2, vol. 24 (2008), pp. 127–135.

<sup>37</sup> See the bibliographical survey of the centre's journal *Genocidas ir rezistencija* published on its website: <http://www.genocid.lt/centras/lt/1202/a/>, 17 December 2012.

<sup>38</sup> This tendency, for example, was recently admitted by Estonian scholar Aigi Rahi-Tamm. See, Aigi Rahi-Tamm, 'Trėmimų tyrimai Estijoje: dabartinė padėtis ir perspektyvos' *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, Nr. 2, Vol. 24 (2008), p. 155.

## Transcribing the Experience of Deportation

The experience of displacement is given meaning through the creative act of recording memory. The focus of this collection is on testimonies of deportation, and thus questions relating to the process and consequences of transcription are key. Whether the text takes the form of a memoir, a diary, letters, or even a fictionalized account, the fact that it points back to the experience of trauma and injustice gives it the character of testimony.

In general, there is a shortage of studies that address the thematic, structural and genre-specific qualities of Gulag testimonies. There has been little effort to investigate how Soviet deportation and exile affected distinct groups of people – children, adolescents, women and men – and how the subjectivity of these groups is textually expressed.<sup>39</sup> How do these memoirs negotiate the relation between individual and collective identity? What were the social networks and modes of interactions that developed among the deportees in camps and exile settlements? How are the experiences of distinct national and social groups reflected? Finally, what role do they still play in society, so many years after the traumatic events have passed?

A major conceptual goal of this collection is thus to bring out the diversity of experiences and their representation in testimony to deportation. The intension here is to grasp the multidimensional and multifaceted view of the deportations rather than to construct an aggregate or master narrative of the event. Therefore, in the first part of the volume, we address the following questions related to various modes of deportation experience and their transcription: Do different groups of deportees experience deportation differently? How do the accounts of women, children and men differ in their representation? Do different ethnic groups remember the traumatic past differently, i.e., how do they use historical and cultural paradigms to structure their experience in unique ways? What are alternative readings of deportation memoirs?

<sup>39</sup> Among the ones that were published one could mention Tiina Kirss, Ene Kõresaar, and Marju Lauristin, *She Who Remembers Survives: Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2004); Birutė Burauskaitė, 'Lietuvos vaikai – 1948–ųjų tremtiniai' *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2, 24 (2008), pp. 64–70; Jūra Avižienis, 'Learning to Curse in Russian: Mimicry in Siberian Exile' in Violeta Kelertas (ed.) *Baltic Postcolonialism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006); Cathy A. Frierson and Semyon S. Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Katherine Jolluck, *Exile and Identity – Polish Women in the Soviet Union During World War II* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2002); Meinhard Stark, *Frauen im Gulag: Alltag und Überleben 1936–1956* (Dt. Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005).



In his survey of Latvian writings of genres ranging on the deportations, **Aldis Purs** tackles the first, essential question that troubles the historian faced with the first-hand account of traumatic experience, which he describes as the challenge of seeing the forest for the trees. How is the subjective, individual perspective offered by the testimony of the deportee to be reconciled with the broader narrative of national history? And by the same token, how is the search for a usable, or even comprehensible past to be reconciled with the individual, irreducible experience and expressions of the individual victim of trauma?

Historians seek to ground their understanding of the past on documentary evidence, on authoritative sources with a claim to expertise in the observation and recording of events. Testimony is suspect because it represents the perspective of an individual whose expertise as an observer is difficult to establish, and whose subjectivity is undermined or her status as a victim, that is, a person with an axe to grind.

But with respect to the Soviet deportations, Purs notes that the historian is faced with little choice. With no access to Soviet records and in light of the censorship and repression of Soviet rule in the post-war era, the personal memoirs of deportees remained the only source of information, however subjective, that was available. Purs surveys the broad scope of the testimonies to deportation recorded by Latvians, as well as the tremendous efforts made among Latvian exiles during the Cold War, and by various groups within Latvia beginning in the late 1980s, to record, compile and preserve the first-hand accounts of the survivors of deportation. In this, Purs highlights the critical role of the editor or compiler of testimonies, whose expertise and dedication have been essential to the recording and presentation of traumatic experience.

For historians **Tomas Balkelis** and **Dalia Leinartė**, the subjectivity of the witness is turned from a liability into an asset. But rather than focusing on the subjective perspective of the individual, they consider the group perspective of children and women, respectively, on the experience of deportation. Leinartė takes up the question of how gender differences affect the experience and interpretation of exile through an analysis of the memoirs of about sixty former deportees and prisoners. She analyzes the changes in gender roles and identities of Lithuanian male and female deportees and compares them with the changes that occurred among the Polish deportees. She explores their views on femininity, masculinity, physical labor, inter-ethnic relations, family, romantic friendship and love

to suggest that displacement had a profound impact on their identities and collective perceptions.

Balkelis analyzes the corpus of memoirs written by Lithuanians who were children when they were deported to uncover a distinct dimension of the deportation experience that has long been neglected by research. The distinctive character of their perspective is due to their immediate perception of reality, unclouded by ideological categories gained from mature experience and socialization. Close attention to the memoirs of child deportees reveals ignored dimensions of the history of the deportation, and of the approach of the Soviet state towards peoples subject to displacement. Moreover, the memoirs of children speak of the role of displacement in the formation of personality, due to the relative weight of the time spent in exile compared to the limited time spent in sedentary life in the homeland. Simply put, child deportees spent their formative years in exile; their memoirs, even when written as adults, provide a clear window to how the experience of displacement affects the formation of personality and subjectivity. In their memoirs, the categories of home and exile, of national identity are put into question, revealing how principles of ethnicity were in fact strengthened, rather than weakened, by the experience of displacement and exile.

Jerilyn Sambrooke takes a different approach to the analysis of how collective identities are constructed through narrative by teasing out the insights that post-colonial theory offers to the study of deportation memoirs of the Baltics, notably how Homi Bhabha's notion of the *unhomely* is used to convey the instability of identity through displacement. Sambrooke's critique of nationalist readings of Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs shows how the text was traditionally read merely as a departure point for political action – a cause – representing the injustice of the regime, leading to political action and the ultimate effect – independence for Lithuania. As an alternative, she focuses her analysis on how the act of writing and reading constitute an act of identity formation on the part of the individual reader. According to Sambrooke, Grinkevičiūtė pushes her readers not only to react against these events in the past, but, more significantly, to come to see how the historical trauma of deportation shapes their identities in the present.

## Transmitting the Experience of Deportation

The metaphor of memory's return, one of the most powerful tropes of the popular movements, suggests that the publication of deportee memoirs was indeed an important cause of the velvet revolutions that brought an end to the communist regimes. But was the relationship of causality so simple? It was not merely the publication of the memoirs in massive numbers that drove the people to revolt, but the manner in which they were read, the transformation they effected on the self-conception of the individuals who read each text. Even while recent interpretations of deportee memoirs struggle to recover the individual voices of the authors from the totalizing narratives of the nation, which eagerly assimilated them as martyrologies, the task of achieving a critical understanding of how deportee memoirs contributed to the formation of collective memory, and to the remarkably coherent collective action during the popular movements, remains. Thus the second part of the volume is devoted to the issues of transmittance, commemoration and public uses of the memory of deportations in contemporary social, cultural and political contexts of Baltic societies.

Violeta Davoliūtė's contribution analyzes the cultural and social context for the reception of the deportee memoirs in Lithuania, explaining the process of reception whereby the experience of the individual, transcribed in a memoir, is appropriated by the collectivity of readers. Describing the experience of displacement, understood as not just deportation, but also collectivization, meliorisation, urbanization and mobilization as a universal feature of Soviet modernization, she traces the emergence of a 'discourse of displacement' in Soviet Lithuanian culture that prepared the ground for the explosive reception of deportee memoirs in the late 1980s.

Taking the memoirs of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė as an example, she demonstrates how some deportee testimonies were structured as Christian narratives of martyrdom, with a strong thematic emphasis on burial and autochthonous concepts of national identity as connected to territory, and a corresponding sensitivity to displacement as trauma. This religious and nationalist dimension of deportee memoirs was enacted in mass rallies dedicated to the reburial of the remains of deportees, brought back to Lithuanian soil from the furthest reaches of the Soviet Union. The testimonial nature of deportee memoirs, combined with the powerful rituals of commemoration that structured their reception, built on the common experience of displacement to catalyze a powerful social movement.

Dovilė Budrytė, a political scientist, continues the analysis of the political uses of memory by developing the concept of 'agents of memory' – women who were deportees and also participants in the armed anti-Soviet resistance movement – to ensure that their experience of trauma remained a substantial part of the meta-narrative of the Lithuanian nation state. By focusing on their experience of having been deported during the Soviet period, Budrytė uncovers their personal narratives and strategies of survival. Based on in-depth interviews with two women, Budrytė demonstrates how individual memories of trauma can be transformed into collective memory. She explores how the women resistance fighters remember their roles as related to violence as well as the traumatic experiences of torture and deportation and how these memories speak to national metanarratives about trauma. She notes that both women felt a strong 'duty of memory,' which resists an instrumentalist approach to collective memory, and dissatisfaction with the lack of transitional justice in post-Soviet Lithuania. Indeed, Budrytė concludes that while the narratives in question underscore the distinct experiences of women, the emancipatory moment of the presented narratives lay in their attempt to conceptualize the experience of exile and resistance as a source of empowerment at the individual level.

Aro Velmet and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė offer contrasting and complementary views of the role of museums in the commemoration of the deportations in the three Baltic States. Velmet's starting point is that the museums represent the dominant discourse of national identity, but he goes on to demonstrate how different practices of representation in each of the museums build upon and disrupt these narratives in distinctive and non-trivial ways. For example, he shows how the Estonian Museum of Occupation showcases a more academic and conservative approach; the Museum of Latvian Occupations and the Lithuanian Museum of Genocide Victims represent a modern, visually and structurally dynamic approach; while Grūtas Park in Lithuania provides an example of a commercial museum. These museums, regardless of their style, often present their narratives in terms of Manichean oppositions of 'good' natives and 'bad' colonizers, 'victims' and 'oppressors'. As a result, deeper complexities of the occupations period, such as the role of native collaborators in perpetuating the Soviet regime or the impact of the Holocaust on pre-war minorities in the Baltics, are often left unexplored. However, curatorial choices, geographical location, the politics of space and experience, among others, shape these narratives in ways that sometimes reinforce, but often complicate the exclusive notions of ethnicity

and nationalism presented in the expositions. Thus, in addition to revealing the explicit politics of exclusion and inclusion at work in each museum, Velmet underscores the importance of presentation and representation in the shaping of narratives of national trauma.

Rindzevičiūtė analyzes the production of knowledge in museums as a process of assembling and representing. As distinct from Velmet, she begins by questioning the assumption that state museums present a hegemonic narrative of the deportation, and focuses on the contingent and at times accidental construction of historical narrative in Lithuanian museums of the occupation. Given a general lack of resources and absence of clear political guidance, gift-giving assumed a central role in the assemblage of the exhibitions about deportations. Rindzevičiūtė shows how the gift-giving not only played an important role in materially sustaining particular communities of former deportees and political prisoners, but also contributed to the placement of certain stories in the museums. As a mode of production of the museum collections and exhibitions, gift-giving explains a discrepancy between a rather coherent verbal discourse about the Soviet deportations, formulated in the governmental documents and parliamentary speeches, and the fragmented stories, assembled in the museums.

Finally, the contributions by Modris Eksteins and Julija Šukys are fascinating examples of the role that mediators can play in the production of deportee memoirs, not just as compilers or editors but as authors in their own right. The composition of family memoirs, often written by the descendants of survivors, is a genre of writing that goes well beyond the experience of deportation to document the workings of memory through the act of writing and reading, the transference of trauma from generation to generation and the formation of collective memory through storytelling, listening and travelling.

The editors of volume would like to express their gratitude to The Director of the Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Institute Dr. Mindaugas Kvietkauskas and the staff of the institute including Gytis Vaškėlis and Ursulė Gedaitė. This project would never have been completed without the generous funding of the Lithuanian Research Council.



## Transcription of the Experience of Displacement





Aldis Purs

## Official and Individual Perceptions: Squaring the History of the Soviet Deportations with the Circle of Testimony in Latvia

From the morning after the mass deportation of June 14, 1941, Latvians have tried to make sense of the event. Questions of who was deported; why were they deported; what was their fate; and whether there would be more deportations, strongly influenced the Latvian response to the Nazi invasion less than a fortnight later. The Nazi propaganda machine deftly exploited the deportations to craft a narrative of Soviet occupation and repression that falsely identified the bulk of the Jewish population of Latvia with the Soviet perpetrators. For Nazi policy, this approach encouraged and justified the Holocaust of Latvia's Jews and was one of many reasons why some Latvians actively participated in these state sanctioned mass murders. The hallmark of this approach was the publication of *Baigais Gads* in 1942,<sup>1</sup> which unfortunately continues to set some of the canonical framework of general Latvian memory of the first year of Soviet occupation (this canon includes the term *Baigais gads*, sadistic tortures such as nail pulling, gruesome photographs of corpses in states of decay, and supposed Jewish involvement). Interestingly, the more academic and thorough approach to the study of Soviet occupation outlined in *Latvijas boļševizācija* by Alfreds Ceichners published in 1943 has faded from public memory. Ceichners' work included its share of spurious conclusions supporting the propaganda aims of the Nazi regime, but it also provided a thorough discussion of how Latvia's society was 'sovietized', and was not simply a yellow journalistic account of repression.<sup>2</sup> The sovietization of society, however, was too complex a process to fit easily into the nation's developing narrative of its recent past; instead, deportations

<sup>1</sup> *Baigais gads* [*Horrible Year*] written by Pauls Kovalevskis, a pseudonym of Pāvils Klāns.

<sup>2</sup> Ceichners' account is enigmatic. The study is too clinical and academic for a popular audience, yet its compromised provenance too frequently discounts it from academic attention as well. Alfreds Ceichners, *Latvijas boļševizācija* [*The Bolshevization of Latvia*] (Rīga: A. Ceichnera apgads, 1944).

and repression became visceral totems of Soviet rule in 1940–1941. The deportations of June 1941 came to define Soviet rule in Latvian memory. The fate of the deportees was an open and painful question in 1941 and remained so for nearly five decades.

Latvian officials within the German Self-Administration and Latvians in non-governmental organizations almost immediately attempted to draw up a list of victims of Soviet terror. This effort continued in displaced persons camps in the British, French, and American zones of occupied Germany after the war's end. Latvian activists compiled information sheets on known and suspected deportees from surviving family members, friends, and associates. The files display a great amount of effort, care, and concern on the part of the compilers, but also a great deal of uncertainty. With no access to Soviet files and little concrete data on the mass deportations, the compilers could never be absolutely sure that people included in their lists had actually been deported. Nor could they be sure that all possible victims were accounted for. Generally, the compilers erred on the side of exaggeration and assumed that people for whom they had little information had been deported. Still, considering the difficult circumstances of displaced persons camps in Germany, the Latvian activists arrived at a surprisingly accurate estimate of between 15 and 20 thousand people deported in June of 1941.<sup>3</sup> This early work would become the basis for the lists of the names of the deported in such publications as *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–1941*.<sup>4</sup> These publications were written in English, and were intended first and foremost to marshal Western outrage against the Soviet occupation of Latvia, and only then to serve as definitive sources on the victims of Soviet mass deportations in occupied Latvia. Even less information was available on the deportations of March of 1949, and there were no similar attempts to catalogue the victims of this atrocity by the Latvian émigré communities in the West. Even more glaringly absent was any attempt by émigré Latvians to record the fate of Latvian Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

<sup>3</sup> The documents are housed at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. The archival collection is titled Preliminary Inventory of the Latvian Central Committee Records, Box/Folders 3, 4; 1–4; 5, 1–3; Box/Folders 10–29. The same collection also includes similar attempts to track and record the 1949 deportations, and the return of Latvians to Soviet Latvia from the USSR and from displaced persons camps.

<sup>4</sup> A second edition was published in 1982: *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–1941 Second edition* (Stockholm: Latvian National Foundation in Cooperation with the World Federation of Free Latvians, 1982).

Latvian émigré communities in the West also attempted to supplement the catalogues of deported citizens with more detailed, personal accounts of Soviet deportations either in memoirs that contained hearsay accounts or observations from witnesses or through memoirs of survivors themselves. Kārlis Strazds' *Es nāku no dzimtenes: Latvijā 1945–1952* (*I Come from the Homeland: In Latvia from 1945–1952*), Jānis Simsons' *Vorkutas Gūstekņa Stāsts* (*The Story of a Vorkuta Prisoner*), Rasma Aizupe's *Sēspadmit gadi Sibīrijā* (*Sixteen Years in Siberia*), and Rūta Ūpīte's *Vēl tā gribējās dzīvot: Pārdzīvojumu stāsts* (*I Still Wanted to Live: Story of Experiences*) are all examples of such survivors' memoirs. Each memoir came with a background story that was equally exceptional. Kārlis Strazds' story, for example, was about life in a repressive society in general and less about any particular repression directed specifically against him. In the denouement, Strazds, who was part of a fishing crew on a boat on the Baltic Sea, steered to a Swedish island and defected.<sup>5</sup> Simsons also emigrated to the West after serving almost ten years at the Vorkuta labor camp.<sup>6</sup> His was one of those exceptional cases that blended relentless family appeals (his wife and son emigrated to the US as Displaced Persons) with moments of Cold War détente style politics (Vice President Richard Nixon played a role in his release from the USSR). Simsons' memoir, published in 1965, was an early source in the West (albeit in Latvian) on the Gulag revolts of 1953.<sup>7</sup> His memoir shaped much of the Latvian émigrés' understanding of conditions within the GULAG. Rasma Aizupe's life story had a similar concluding trajectory. Aizupe was administratively exiled to Siberia in the mass deportation of June 14, 1941. She returned to Latvia in 1957 and wrote directly to Khrushchev for permission to emigrate from the USSR to join her daughter in the USA. Her memoir was published in Canada, also in Latvian, in 1974.

Rūta Ūpīte's posthumous autobiography broke from this pattern of memoirs written in the West. *Vēl tā gribējās dzīvot: Pārdzīvojumu stāsts* chronicled the life of a girl sent into administrative exile following

<sup>5</sup> Kārlis Strazds, *Es nāku no dzimtenes: Latvijā 1945–1952* (Rīga: Daugava, 2008). Originally Stockholm: Daugava, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> Simsons and Strazds briefly discuss filtration camps in the immediate post-war period. These camps, which detained prisoners of war and catalogued political reliability, are the least understood episode in the Soviet incarceration and imprisonment of Latvians during World War II. Standard émigré accounts initially believed all prisoners of war were immediately deported to Siberia, but many were released from filtration camps to return to Soviet Latvia. This process is still relatively poorly understood or studied. Jānis Simsons, *Vorkutas Gūstekņa Stāsts*. (Lincoln, Neb.: Vaidava, 1965).

<sup>7</sup> Len Latkovskis, 'Baltic Prisoners in the Gulag Revolts of 1953', *Lituanus*, 51, 3 (Fall 2005), pp.

the mass deportation of June 14, 1941. Like Simsons and Aizupe, Ūpīte returned to Latvia following the general amnesties of the mid to late 1950s. Unlike Simsons and Aizupe, Ūpīte passed away in 1957 from tuberculosis. Ūpīte's father eventually smuggled his daughter's notes to the West in 1967 where they were readied for publication. Fearing additional political reprisals against Ūpīte's father, publication was delayed until 1977 and then under the pen name Rūtiņa U. Ūpīte's account differs from the other two in its more simple, straightforward descriptive tone. Ūpīte's account is more clearly a diary of lived experiences (including the mundane, trivial and commonplace) rather than a political autobiography intent on making an expose. Although it was translated into English, neither Ūpīte's account, nor Simsons' nor Aizupe's autobiographies reached a wide Western audience. Latvian émigrés embraced all three accounts as proof of the Soviet Union's genocidal intent toward the 'captive' Latvian nation, even if Ūpīte's account in particular was more nuanced. To the larger Western audience of Sovietologists, these accounts reinforced the existing polarity of views on the academic landscape: they were taken either as additional proof of the Soviet Union's totalitarian quality or as the tendentious products of an émigré community with a political axe to grind.

Within Soviet Latvia, however, the fate and experience of the deportees was not discussed in public spaces. Some people were successfully rehabilitated in the late 1950s, but the episode was largely 'forgotten' by the public. Many returned deportees continued to suffer the 'stain' of previous arrest and displacement in terms of limited career opportunities, but for others this discrimination was less pronounced. In Soviet Latvia, repression and deportation played almost no role in cultural production, as it did, fitfully, in Soviet Russia. There was little to no cultural thaw and Soviet Latvia did not have its version of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. In the mid 1980s, however, as Latvian dissidents pressed the limits of the Gorbachev inspired glasnost campaign, the fate and lived experience of the deportees returned front and center to public space. The anniversaries of mass deportations became seminal moments in the opposition to Soviet rule, and Soviet Latvian literary journals began to publish on the deportee experience. Historians played an active part in dismantling official Soviet myths about the dismantling of the Republic of Latvia and its incorporation into the Soviet Union. Political events rushed ahead and by the summer of 1991, Latvia regained its independence from the rapidly collapsing central Soviet state.

The historians of independent Latvia, freed from any remaining shackles of censorship or forbidden topics, moved quickly to re-

examine the nature of Soviet repression and the fate of the repressed. The process continues to this day, largely within a formalized structure of research under the auspices of the Latvian State Historical Archive, the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991, and the Presidential Commission of the Historians of Latvia. Through the tireless work of all those involved in these institutions, many of the great mysteries of Soviet repression have been resolved. The fate of Kārlis Ulmanis, for example, was thoroughly investigated by the historian Indulis Ronis, and his seminal *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā* documents Ulmanis' time under house arrest, his NKVD interrogations, and resolves the question of his death.<sup>8</sup> Ronis also provides masterful essays about the historiographical theme of traitors to the state of Latvia, and the fate of other prominent state figures. Ronis concluded that additional vital details and information remain hidden from academic research by the continued denial of access to files housed in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation.

Historians, particularly in conjunction with the Latvian State Historical Archive, tackled the massive task of identifying the citizens of Latvia who were deported and administratively exiled by the Soviet state. Ultimately, this project produced the massive catalogues of those deported in June of 1941 (*Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* edited by Elmārs Pelkaus<sup>9</sup>) and March of 1949 (*Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* edited by Guna Pence<sup>10</sup>). Each of these tomes consists of an accounting of all of the individuals deported and administratively exiled in alphabetical order by geographical district. Each entry includes the person's name, their birth date, place of residence, arrest date, their place of resettlement, their place and date of death (if applicable) or their date of release. The entry also includes the archival location of the specific file for the deported. According to these massive volumes, 15,424 people were deported from Latvia on June 14, 1941, of which nearly 40% died while incarcerated,<sup>11</sup> while another 42,125 were administratively exiled on March 25, 1949 (211 were born en route to exile and 513 more were deported soon after the 25<sup>th</sup>). Of those deported in 1949, 5,231 died while

<sup>8</sup> Indulis Ronis, *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā: Dokumenti un materiāli* (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1994). Ulmanis died on September 20, 1942 in Krasnovodsk (Türkmenbaşy), Turkmenistan of dysentery.

<sup>9</sup> Elmārs Pelkaus (ed), *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Guna Pence (ed), *Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2007) 2 volumes.

<sup>11</sup> Indulis Zālite and Sindija Eglīte, '1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācijas struktūranalizē' in Elmārs Pelkaus (ed), *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2001), p. 688.

incarcerated, 38,902 were eventually released, and data is missing for 138.<sup>12</sup> An additional project by the Latvian Historical Institute produced a similar catalogue of Latvia's inhabitants that were convicted of crimes against the Soviet state from 1940 to 1986.<sup>13</sup> This tome adds another '49,231 persons who, as individuals or in groups, were tried by occupation courts'.<sup>14</sup> According to these volumes, the Soviet state deported or arrested for political crimes 107,486 inhabitants of Latvia. Although these volumes have an air of finality to them, and provide a final hallowed number, they also have addendum and corrections inserted at the end. Ultimately, this 'devotion to finding a final tally' is as much an attempt to bear witness and to memorialize, as it is a search for 'historical truth...they are grand efforts of intent inherently incapable of final completion; there may always be one more (or less) name'.<sup>15</sup>

Latvian historians have progressed from this grand effort to the no less important journeyman work of fleshing out the details of repression and deportation. The annual book of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991 is a particularly strong indicator of the most current research and work. Over the past two decades, historians have provided detailed structural analyses of deportations and repression, have created breakdowns of victims by age, profession, ethnicity, gender, and geographical location, and have examined the security agencies involved in repression and deportations down to the finest of details. Elsewhere, I have detailed how this growing body of historical work in Latvia on Soviet repressions and deportations differs from the emerging consensus of Soviet specialists elsewhere. Essentially, Latvian historians and much of the public understand Soviet repression and deportations as part of a genocidal project against the Latvian nation. Soviet specialists disagree. They draw attention to the differences between GULAG sentences and administrative exile and place Baltic deportations into the larger framework of Soviet terror and the forced displacement of populations that include similar actions in the USSR

<sup>12</sup> A. Āboliņa, '1949. gada 25. marta deportācijas struktūranalizē' in Guna Pence (ed). *Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2007), pp. 191.

<sup>13</sup> Rudīte Viksne and Kārlis Kangeris (eds). *No NKVD līdz KGB: Politiskās prāvas Latvijā 1940–1986: Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs*. (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 973.

<sup>15</sup> Aldis Purs, 'Soviet in form, local in content: elite repression and mass terror in the Baltic States, 1940–1953' in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stebbins (eds), *Stalinist Terror in Eastern Europe: Elite purges and mass repression* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 27.

in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>16</sup> This debate among historians, often expressed in the language of academic discourse in conferences and articles, has fostered many distortions in academic research and its popular reception. The comparatively better funded institutions for research into the occupation (and primarily into the Stalinist era) has unsurprisingly favored and rewarded more research into occupations, repression and deportation. Following the money, fewer historians have researched and worked on the interwar period, the nineteenth century or earlier periods. Similarly, although notable efforts have focused on the Holocaust, it is still underrepresented in the research of Latvia's historians over the past two decades. Moreover, little of the research that has been made on the Holocaust attempts to incorporate it into the larger framework of violence and death in the region. Academic research, however, has also not sated the appetite of the general public (and of the occasional politician) for conclusiveness and to give a human face to the historical experiences of Latvians in deportation. Into this void, a growing list of memoirs and oral history projects has attempted to add faces to the lists of names and dates. These more personal accounts attempt to return an emotional dimension to descriptions of terror and deportation that are often missing in more scholarly work.

The personal details of the accounts of survivors are also particularly important due to popular concerns about time sensitivity and political need. There is a fear that, as survivors grow old and pass away, their stories will be lost. The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia includes a testimonial project that records survivors' stories specifically for this reason. The placing of real human faces on the historical experience of repression and deportation is considered essential to counter the denials, made by some political parties and politicians, of the very fact of Soviet occupation. Periodic media accounts of the relative historical ignorance of the younger generation further fuels the surge in memoirs and oral histories that center on the most traumatic periods of Latvia's occupation by the USSR. Although almost all such accounts include considerable amounts of trauma, brutality, and arbitrary power, they do not always stay completely within the popular narrative of trauma as the decisive symbol of the Soviet experience for deportees. If academic historical accounts sketch a proverbial forest of Soviet repression, deportations and occupation, memoirs and oral histories detail the individual trees within that forest. The uniqueness of each tree, at times, threatens to undermine the more general sketch of the forest.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

The early trendsetter in recording the individual's experience of deportation was the on-going, multi-volume collection *Via Dolorosa* edited by Anda Līce. The first volume was published in 1990 and the most recent, the 6th, in 2008. The series is sub-titled the 'testimony of Stalinist victims' and includes autobiographies, photographs, historical essays, and poetry. Initially, as evident in the series' title, direct and indirect parallels were made or implied between the Biblical suffering of Jesus as he approached crucifixion and the experience of the Latvian nation. This theme, however, has receded somewhat in the most recent volumes. Similarly, the earliest volumes actively engaged with the collapse of the Soviet state; they discussed what had not been allowed before and documented the moving compass of press freedoms. As historical sources for academics, however, they are flawed. Most of the autobiographies are fragments of larger unpublished works or are episodic. The reader gets a sense of the deportation experience, and certain common themes and stories of exceptional individuality emerge, but academic rigor is incomplete. This, however, is the point – *Via Dolorosa* is meant to preserve testimonies, and to encourage people to read them. For historians, it is a starting point for further work. Other books and journalistic stories mimic the style and approach of *Via Dolorosa*. The volume *Rētas*, for example, is a published account of the testimonies of Stalinist victims who lived or live in the district of Bauska.<sup>17</sup>

If *Via Dolorosa* depicts the life stories of Stalinist victims, its size, great number of testimonies, and differentiation diminish its effectiveness. The memoir skirts this complexity by presenting the experience of deportation and repression through the vehicle of a single individual or family. The most well known example of this kind of autobiography is Sandra Kalniete's *Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas sniegos*.<sup>18</sup> This book has been translated into at least 11 languages (the English translation is entitled *With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows*) and is in the earliest stages of adaptation for the screen. Kalniete herself is a prominent politician in Latvia who was Minister of Foreign Affairs and is currently a member of the European Parliament. The book, however, is more an investigation into family history than autobiography – Kalniete was born in Siberia in 1952 and returned to Latvia in 1957. Her own recollections of this time period are the memories of a small child. Instead, Kalniete reconstructs the lives of family members (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) through family stories, letters, and archival documents.

<sup>17</sup> Anita Rozentāle (ed), *Rētas: Staļinisma upuru liecības* (Bauska: SIA Bauskas Dzīve, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Sandra Kalniete, *Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas sniegos* (Rīga: Atēna, 2001).



She intersperses the experience of her family with contemporary events in Latvia. Essentially Kalniete's book is similar to Modris Eksteins' *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century*, excerpted in this volume. Eksteins, whose family fled westward at the end of World War II and eventually emigrated to Canada, intersperses his and his family's history with contemporary events in Western history.<sup>19</sup> He draws parallels between the two and attempts to intertwine the personal story of a family with the larger history of the West. Kalniete attempts to do the same thing by positing her family's experience of deportation as a kind of archetype for the Latvian deportation experience. The cynic might conclude that this is politically motivated, but the emotional journey documented throughout the book seems sincere and authentic. As an eyewitness account, however, this journey consists largely of hearsay; Kalniete tells the story she has heard or that she uncovers through the archives, and not her own. Furthermore, she frequently indulges in a degree of creative, poetic license. She uses her best educated guess (often with the help of historians) to imagine the suffering, material conditions, and even thoughts of family members even when she has no direct evidence. As an emotive tool to overcome the limitations of scholarly discourse this may be effective, but it cannot be taken as a firsthand testimony of repression and deportation.

Where Kalniete's book is lacking, the memoirs of Ilmars Knaģis are not. Knaģis' remarkable autobiography, *Bij tādī laiki* is subtitled the 'adventures of a successful person,' and has its share of structural weaknesses, meandering narratives, and tangents into Latvia's pre-war and contemporary politics. Still, Knaģis' description of deportation, repression, and life in Siberia has a rare, authentic timbre. Knaģis' account, translated into English as *There Was Such a Time*, is particularly descriptive and valuable because of his age at deportation; he was fifteen when he was deported on June 14, 1941. His relatively young age kept him with his mother when women and children were separated from adult males, but he was old enough to remember the time prior to his deportation as well as his experiences as a teenager and later, as a young adult. As such, his memory is vivid and alive with the minutiae of daily life as well as the trauma of transport. His story is very much a *bildungsroman* or coming of age story that blends the excitement and confidence of a young adult with the injustice and despair of a deportee. Despite occasional detours into debatable generalizations

<sup>19</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of our Century* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1999).

about pre-war Latvia or contemporary affairs, Knaģis provides a remarkably fair and balanced account of life in Siberia. His restraint is all the more remarkable considering that Knaģis was one of the 3,750 children deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941. Some of those children, Knaģis included, were allowed to return to Latvia in a short-lived campaign to repatriate orphans in 1946 and 1947.<sup>30</sup> Many of them, Knaģis also included, were then deported a second time in 1949. As a result, Knaģis' autobiography includes details on a double return to Latvia and a double deportation as well.

The subject matter of deported children is the central focus of one of the larger and more polished oral history projects, *Sibīrijas bērni: mums bija tas jāizstāsta*, edited by Dzintra Geks. The two-volume tome is a labor of devotion and love and the result of tireless work. Geks and her co-editor, Aivars Lubānietis, travelled across Latvia, Russia, Israel and the USA to interview 670 people who were minors when deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941 (an astonishing figure: nearly 18% of the total number of deported minors).<sup>31</sup> Geks strove to record the individual stories before they were lost and her account is rich with photographic details from children's lives before deportation and during administrative exile as well.<sup>32</sup> The production value of the two volumes is considerable. The oral histories reinforce the trees and forest analogy in content and detail. Many of the interviews produce single page recollections that are terse and sparse of detail and emotion. Others are long detailed accounts of lives lived before, during and after deportation.

A much shorter, yet equally poignant child's testimony of deportation is the small collection of drawings created by Benita Pleznere-Eglīte following her deportation as a young girl on March 25, 1949. She was one of 10,987 minors deported in the mass action against kulaks.<sup>33</sup> Pleznere-Eglīte sent drawings of Siberia to her relatives remaining in Latvia from the artistic eye of an eleven-year old girl. Years later, in 1993, she donated these drawings to the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991. The Museum recorded her recollections and published them and her drawings unedited as *Ar bērnu*

<sup>30</sup> For more on this curious episode, see Alfrēds Staris, '1941. gadā okupantu izsūtīto Latvijas iedzīvotāju bērnu ērkšķainais atceļš uz dzimteni' in *Latvijas vēsture* 1995, 1(16), pp. 37–44.

<sup>31</sup> Dzintra Geks (ed), *Sibīrijas bērni: mums bija tas jāizstāsta...* 2 volumes (Tālsī: Fonds Sibīrijas bērni, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Dzintra Geks, by profession, is a film director where she has also repeatedly returned to the topic of deportations and survivors' testimonies for the subject matter of several documentaries. The film documentary style in many ways permeates the written volumes as well.

<sup>33</sup> '1949. gada 25. marta deportācijas struktūranalīze' in Guna Pence (ed), *Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2007) Volume 1, p.186.

*acīm: vienpadsmitgadīgās Nitas zīmējumi, kas sūtīti no Sibīrijas uz Latviju.*<sup>24</sup> The simple yet expressive drawings and the matter of fact recollections mirror a similar short film, *Little Bird's Diary*, which also relays a part of Latvia's history through drawings and stories from an individual's life.<sup>25</sup>

The final oral history project to be considered in this short review of the literature is Irēna Saleniece's edited collection *1949. gada 25. martā izvesto balsis*. Saleniece, together with the Oral History Center of the University of Daugavpils, has produced an edited collection of oral histories taken from three families with supporting documents and supporting scholarly essays on oral histories (generally and specifically), as well as a historiography of the March 25, 1949 deportations.<sup>26</sup> Saleniece's work is crucially important because it addresses the experience of deportation through the experience of people from Latgale (specifically Daugavpils district and the neighboring district of Ilūkste). Latgale is enigmatic to most generalizations about Latvia. As I have argued elsewhere, 'democratic Latvia was least democratic in Latgale, and authoritarian Latvia was most authoritarian in Latgale as well.'<sup>27</sup> This tendency towards differentness in historical experience continued through the Soviet era and remains a part of contemporary Latvia (Latgale is the least ethnically Latvian portion of the country). Still, more than 8,000 people were deported from Latgale in the 1949 deportations, and almost 3,000 were deported in the 1941 deportations.<sup>28</sup> If in many things, Latgale is different from Latvia, it shared in Latvia's loss through deportation and repression. Saleniece's edited collection is an important addition to address whether the experience of deportation and repression was alike as well or dissimilar.

<sup>24</sup> Benita Pleznēre-Eglīte, *Ar Bērna Acīm: vienpadsmitgadīgās Nitas zīmējumi, kas sūtīti no Sibīrijas uz Latviju* (Rīga: 'Latvia During 50 Years of Occupation' Museum Foundation in Co-operation with the National Oral History Project, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvian Academy of Sciences, 1996). The accompanying English translation is titled *Through the Eyes of a Child: Drawings of eleven-year old Nita mailed from Siberian exile to Latvia*.

<sup>25</sup> The sublime short film *Little Bird's Diary* (2007), directed by Edmunds Jansons tells the life story of Irina Pilke through her diary of sketches.

<sup>26</sup> Saleniece, Irēna (ed). *1949. gada 25. Martā izvesto balsis: Dažu Daugavpils un Ilūkstes apriņķa deportēto ģimeņu likteņi mutvārdu vēstures avotos un arhīva dokumentos*, (Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitātes akadēmiskais apgāds Saule, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Aldis Purs, *Creating the State From Above and Below: Local Government in Inter-war Latvia*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1998, p. 177.

<sup>28</sup> I have included the district of Ilūkste that is historically akin to Latgale within these estimates taken from Elmārs Pelkaus (ed), *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2001), p. 689 and Guna Pence (ed), *Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2007) volume 1, p. 193.

The memorial and oral history literature reviewed above includes the testimonies of nearly 900 people. How has it differed from, or reinforced, the extant and growing historiography of repression and population displacement in Soviet Latvia? In many of the essential episodes of deportation, particularly the opening acts of arrest and transport, memoirs and oral histories reiterate the work of historians that have examined how deportations were organized and executed. The descriptions of men at the door (and who those men were), of hurried packing of goods and supplies, of waiting at train depots, and long, tortuous two week journeys into Siberia, interrupted only by the separation of men from their families (in 1941), with little to eat and abysmal sanitary conditions is similar in both cases. Still, memoirs and oral histories provide a corrective to histories drawn from records taken from state-centric sources. As Irēna Saleniece insightfully points out:

The historiography of this topic is dominated by research works based on sources drawn from the organs of repression and other power structures of the USSR. This provides a quiet objective judgment of the intentions and activities of the organs of power, but leaves in the shadow the individual experience of the people who were at a moment's notice deported from their place of residence to an alien land. The position of the deported people as the object of actions by the authorities is mediated through the prism of power; hence sources of personal origin are indispensable for a more comprehensive study of this topic.<sup>29</sup>

What precisely do these sources of personal origin contribute or, more poetically, what emerges from the shadows when we examine individual experiences?

The testimonies of individuals offer a greater and more nuanced understanding from the very first moments of deportation. Sources from the organs of repression detail who was detained, who went to detain them, provide inventories of the detainee's possessions (taken and left behind), and can even provide the itineraries taken into administrative exile complete with convoy numbers, and the names of guards and fellow deportees alike. Memoirs and oral histories explain in visceral detail the emotion and shock of the moment, but also how vital those first moments potentially were. Many deportees recalled soldiers or guards helping them pack for transport or advising what to take, while others left almost empty-handed. The amount and quality of goods in one's possession helped determine their chances of survival and their general health. Food

<sup>29</sup> Saleniece, p. 351.

for transport kept some healthier, warm clothing meant better chances of survival in frigid weather, and any and all possessions meant the possibility of selling and bartering goods with Siberian locals for food in times of want and starvation. As a gross generalization, deportees in 1949 packed more and better material to take with them (they were also legally entitled to take more with them, although few were advised of these rights). Surprisingly, but understandably, deportees remember thankfully those very members of the repressive state organs arresting and transporting (and later guarding or supervising) them that gave them hints or even the faintest aid in surviving their ordeals. This experience, however, was far from universal; equally many deportees bemoaned the summer clothes on their backs or the supplies left behind that could have helped. Clearly this is also the case for many deportees who did not survive and therefore could not leave their testimonies of the experience.

Almost all of the testimonies have a great many common descriptive similarities. They all discuss the poor quality of food, the lack of food, periods of extreme want and starvation, and the great lengths taken to find food (including a long list of foods eaten out of desperation). Similarly, cold weather, inadequate living conditions (even the lack of any housing), infestations of lice and other bugs, debilitating illnesses and disease, and the completely arbitrary dispensation of justice are found in almost all testimonies (with each stressing one or the other more depending on their own experiences). One aspect of this arbitrariness was the frequent and seemingly counter-productive movement of deportees from one location to the next (this seems more pronounced for deportees from 1941). One survivor even titled his testimony 'I have been in seven prisons and six camps'.<sup>10</sup> This number was likely not a record nor even particularly exceptional. For those deportees that were charged with political crimes, a common vein through the testimonies was navigating the difficult and adversarial (usually predatory) relationship between political criminals, non-political criminals, and jailors. And as with the abovementioned maladies, a broad spectrum of experiences with common criminals emerged. Some deportees remembered with bitterness how common criminals would strip political prisoners of anything of value and keep them in a constant state of fear, while others remembered victories over common criminals. Similarly, most testimonies included commentary on relations with earlier deportees

<sup>10</sup> Jānis Dauksts, 'Esmu bijis septiņos cietumos, sešos lēģeros' in Anda Līce (ed.) *Via Dolorosa: Staļinisma upura liecības* (Rīga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzejs, 2007). Volume 5.

(either relations between 1941 and 1949 deportees or with deportees from the 1930s). Generally speaking each new wave of deportees encountered conditions slightly better (but still barbarous) than the previous wave as earlier groups had built some structures or began kolkhoz construction.

Just as crucial differences in how each individual was detained and transported can only be understood through memoirs and oral histories, each individual's experience of the abovementioned challenges varied in important and consequential ways. Four of the most important factors for survival were the location of exile, the time of year of arrival, the ability to survive the first year, and the differences between political imprisonment and administrative exile. Some deportees were deposited near established communities or kolkhozes that were relatively receptive to new people and/or specifically needed the skill sets that deportees had (often literacy, bookkeeping, farming, general mechanics). These deportees were the most fortunate, were the most likely to survive deportation, and in many cases even thrive and succeed in their new homes. This was most apparent during the 1949 deportations when trains filled with deportees would stop at kolkhozes along the route and local officials would comb through the deportees as though participating in a modern slave fair, choosing the strong and able. Siberian kolkhozes following World War II were desperate for manpower, and in some cases, deportees quickly prospered in exile.<sup>31</sup>

Just as easily, however, location and the timing of arrival at a location could result in insurmountable challenges. The most infamous case is likely the so-called island of death at Agapitova. In the fall of 1942, 700 people were deposited in an area completely unprepared for habitation. The deportees struggled to build shelter and find food in the midst of a crippling winter. By springtime, only 70 survived, including only 6 Latvian children.<sup>32</sup> Outside of these extremes, if deportees were able to survive transport and their first year or two in exile, their conditions improved considerably, particularly if they were not directly incarcerated in a prison or prison camp. By and large, by this time most deportees became members of local kolkhozes, worked in fisheries or even in industry. For those deported in 1949, better conditions accelerated rapidly as mail with relatives in Latvia brought packages of supplies and emotional comfort.

<sup>31</sup> See for example the Kalvāns and Redzobs family experience in Saleniece, p. 185–302.

<sup>32</sup> Geks, p. 6. All of the Latvian survivors are interviewed in the Geks' volume *Sibīrijas bērni*, and are also the subject matter of one of her film documentaries. The story of Agapitova also features prominently in Ilmārs Kņagiš-Bij Tādi Laiki, pp. 80–88.

There is still a great deal to be researched and written about Latvia's experience under Soviet occupation, including within the theme of repression and population displacement. Most work, to this point, has focused on the Stalinist years of occupation, on periods of mass trauma. At its most simple, this period of Latvia's history has been a story of trauma with either state agents inflicting trauma or Latvians as victims. As the use of mass state terror receded following Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, the subject matter for historians will become far more complex and nuanced. Future topics for historians will include how returning deportees were received when they returned from administrative exile, the development of ethnic relations in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and how Soviet Latvian citizens interacted with a state built on terror and mass repression, but that no longer employed those tools. I suspect that in many of these realms, official documents will prove ambiguous and unsatisfactory. The role of oral history and sources of personal origin may be far better suited for a reappraisal of this time period. We are, however, not yet ready for this re-examination. Memoirs from the 1970s and later that discuss exile are few and far apart.<sup>33</sup> Still, a greater reliance on oral history and individual experience will reintroduce the age-old dilemma of perspective, of the forest and the trees. As we turn more to individual's experiences, will we still be able to offer an over-arching narrative of Latvia's experience? Likewise, just as state sources are problematic and need to be thoroughly vetted, so does oral history.

The interweaving of histories written from state sources (or from the perspective of politicians) and oral histories and memoirs is still new and novel to Latvian historiography. Saleniec's *Izvesto balsis* is the most accomplished to date with strong and compelling oral history cases, a theoretical understanding of oral histories, grounding in associated archival documents, and a sense of the larger historiographical debate. As such, it is a beacon for future work. But even Saleniec's edited collection, however, could push the envelope farther. The volume includes the life story of a woman who gives up her infant daughter at the moment of deportation. Later they are reunited and the story is told from the daughter's perspective; the mother is unable to talk about this episode. This would be a perfect point to discuss the psychological approach of Vieda Skultans, who in *The Testimony of Lives*, discusses how being able to discuss past traumas suggests a degree of healing and incorporation. The inability to discuss trauma suggests the person is still

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Helēna Celmiņa, *Tuvumā un Tālumā* (Rīga: Tēriņi Devīni, 2004).

traumatized.<sup>14</sup> Saleniece has incorporated oral history and official history; the example of Skultans would suggest that there is room for the anthropologist and psychologist as well. Likewise, the introduction of a comparative historical approach would only strengthen academic discourse about oral histories and deportations alike. The experience of Lithuanians, Estonians, Volga Germans, Poles, and many other victims of Stalinism are but one common vein for a comparative approach. Most crucially, the integration of the Holocaust into the discussion of terror, repression, population displacement and murder is an overwhelming necessity. Weaving the Holocaust with Soviet terror may produce complex accounts where perpetrators and collaborators become, in turn, victims. Still, such a step would help correct a historical wrong. The Holocaust violently removed the Jewish community from Latvia's ethnic collage. This same community and its destruction cannot be removed from historical discussions of terror, displacement and repression more generally in the region. In other words, the Holocaust was not a phenomenon in a vacuum. It was the most extreme and final of many acts of displacement, terror, and murder that began with the repatriation of Baltic Germans in 1939 and extended on through the mass deportations of 1949.

## References

- Aizupe, Rasma. *Selpadmis gadi Sibīrijā* (Toronto: Apgāds Alta, 1974).
- Budryte, Dovile. *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States* (Ashgate, 2005).
- Ceichners, Alfreds. *Latvijas bolševizācija* [*The Bolshevization of Latvia*] (Rīga: A. Ceichnera apgāds, 1944).
- Celmiņa, Helēna. *Tuvumā un Tālumā* (Rīga: Treji Deviņi, 2004).
- Geks, Dzintars (ed.). *Sibīrijas bērni: mums bija tas jāzestāsta...* 2 volumes (Talsi: Fonds Sibīrijas bērni, 2007).
- Kalme, *Total Terror: An Expose of Genocide in the Baltics* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951).
- Kalniņe, Sandra. *Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas miegos* (Rīga: Atēna, 2001).
- Kirss, Tiina (ed.). Special Issue: Baltic Life Stories in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 36, 1 (Spring 2005).
- Knaģis, Ilmārs. *Bij Tādi Laiki* (Rīga: Jāņa Rozes apgāds, 2001).
- Kovaļevskis, Pauls. *Baigais gads*. Rīga: 1942.
- Krumiņš, Gatis. 'Daži jauni fakti par 1949. gada deportācijas organizēšanu un kolektivizāciju' in *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 2009, 1 (70), pp. 81–88.
- Latkovskis, Len. 'Baltic Prisoners in the Gulag Revolts of 1953' in *Lituanus*, 51, 3 and 4 (Fall and Winter 2005).
- Lazda, Mara. 'Women, Nation, and Survival: Latvian Women in Siberia 1941–1957' in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 36, 1 (Spring 2005), pp. 1–12.
- Licc, Anda (Compiled). *Via Dolorosa: Staļinisma upura liecības* (Rīga: Liesma/Latvijas Okupācijas muzejs, 1990–2008). 6 volumes.

<sup>14</sup> Vieda Skultans, *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (London: Routledge, 1997).



- Nollendorfs, Valters and Knoll, Matthias (eds). *Latvijas Okupācijas muzejs. Latvija zem Padomju Savienības un nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas varas 1940–1991* (Rīga: Latvijas 50 gadu Okupācijas muzeja fonds, 1998).
- Pelkaus, Elmārs (ed). *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2001).
- Pence, Guna (ed). *Aizvestie: 1949. gada 23. martis* (Rīga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2007) 2 volumes.
- Pleznere-Eglīte, Benita. *Ar Bērna Acīm: vienpadsmitgadīgās Nitas ziņējumi, kas sūtīti no Sibīrijas uz Latviju* (Rīga: 'Latvia During 50 Years of Occupation' Museum Foundation in Co-operation with the National Oral History Project, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvian Academy of Sciences, 1996).
- Purs, Aldis. *Creating the State From Above and Below: Local Government in Inter-war Latvia*. Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Toronto, 1998.
- Purs, Aldis. 'How those Brothers in Foreign Lands are Dividing the Fatherland': Latvian National Politics in Displaced Persons Camps after the Second World War' in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds), *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–1950* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).
- Purs, Aldis. 'Soviet in form, local in content: elite repression and mass terror in the Baltic states, 1940–1953' in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe (eds), *Stalinist Terror in Eastern Europe: Elite purges and mass repression* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).
- Ronis, Indulis. *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā: Dokumenti un materiāli* (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1994).
- Rozentāle, Anita (ed). *Rētas: Staļinisma upuru liecības* (Bauska: SIA Bauskas Dzīve, 2001).
- Rūtiņa U [Rūta Ūpīte]. *Vēl tā gribējās dzīvot: Pārdzīvojamu stāsts*. (Grāmatu Draugs, 1977)
- Saleniece, Irēna (ed). *1949. gada 25. Martā izvesto baltus: Dažu Daugavpils un Ilūkstes apriņķa deportēto ģimeņu lūgteni mutvārdu vēstures avotos un arhīva dokumentos*, (Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitātes akadēmiskais apgāds Saule, 2008).
- Simons, Jānis. *Vorkuta: Gūstekņa Stāsts*. (Lincoln, Neb.: Vaidava, 1965).
- Skultans, Vieda. *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (London: Routledge, 1997).
- Staris, Alfrēds. '1941. gadā okupantu izsūtīto Latvijas iedzīvotāju bērnu ērkšķainais atceļš uz dzimteni' in *Latvijas vēsture* 1995, 1(16), pp. 37–44.
- Stepens, Ojārs. *The 14 June 1941 Deportation in Latvia* (Rīga: The Occupation Museum Foundation, 2001).
- Strazds, Kārlis. *Es nāku no dzimtenes: Latvijā 1945–1952* (Rīga: Daugava, 2008). Originally Stockholm: Daugava, 1953.
- Strods, Heinrihs. 'PSRS Valsts Drošības ministrijas pilnīgi slepenā Baltijas valstu iedzīvotāju izsūtīšanas operācija Krasta banga' ('Priboj') (1949. gada 25. februāris – 23. augusts) in *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1998, 2 (30), pp. 39–47.
- Strods, Heinrihs. 'Latvijas cilvēku izvedēji 1949. gada 25. martā' in *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1999, 1 (33), pp. 68–75.
- Šilde, Ādolf. *Pa deportēto pēdām: Latvieši padomju vergu darbā* (New York: Grāmatu draugs, 1956).
- These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–1941 Second edition* (Stockholm: Latvian National Foundation in Cooperation with the World Federation of Free Latvians, 1982).
- Viksne, Rudīte and Kangeris, Kārlis (eds). *No NKVD līdz KGB: Politiskās prāvas Latvijā 1940–1986: Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs*. (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1999).
- We Sang Through Tears: Stories of Survival in Siberia* (Rīga: , 1999).
- I Zāle and S. Dimante. 'Četrdesmito gadu deportācijas. Struktūralaize' in *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1998, n. 2.

Tomas Balkelis

## Ethnicity and Identity in the Memoirs of Lithuanian Children Deported to the Gulag

*In exile, my friends from the deportation train and I are sitting not on class benches – we are digging salt in Siberian Ussol. The salt melts in the water, but not in our memory. It will never melt in the memory ... The memory is stronger than a stone. Our memory is made of diamonds.*

From memoirs of Antanina Garmutė<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The displacement of children is a theme rarely examined in scholarly works on Soviet deportations. This can be partly explained by the fact that children, other than the homeless and those considered inveterately delinquent, were seldom a discrete target group for the Soviet repressive apparatus.<sup>2</sup> Most often they were deported just because they were members of the families of 'enemies of the socialist state'. Yet one of key premises of this chapter is that deported children should not be viewed as 'secondary' victims of a totalitarian regime, nor merely as another voiceless sub-group, but as active and articulate social agents in their own right. My principal aim in this chapter, that investigates the fate of Lithuanian children in Soviet deportations, is not to present a 'children's martyrology,' but to try to understand the complex specificities of children's perceptions, experiences and actions by paying attention to their own voices.

But why study the forcibly displaced children separately from the parents with whom they were dispatched into exile? Can we understand the Soviet deportations in some different way by focusing on the experiences, actions and testimonies of children instead of those of adults? For one thing, the experiences of children in exile were often different from those of their parents. While adults were subject to brutal collective labour

<sup>1</sup> Parts of an earlier draft of this chapter have been published as 'Lithuanian Children in the Gulag. Deportations, Ethnicity and Identity. Memoirs of Children Deportees, 1941–1952' in *Lituanus. Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 51, Nr.3 (Fall 2005).

Published in Aldona Žemaitytė, ed., *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje* [In the Frozen Land] (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), pp. 73–74.

<sup>2</sup> Rosaria Franco, 'Social Order and Social Policies towards Displaced Children: the Soviet Case, 1917–1953', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Manchester, 2006).

obligations, their children – while most were also required to undertake forced labour – were sometimes afforded access to schools where they were to receive basic education and to undergo re-socialization as future citizens. The Soviet regime's treatment of deported children throws light on its perceptions of the collective 'other' and the capacities of individuals at different life-stages to undergo reform and rehabilitation. Stalinist attitudes and policies towards deported children also starkly highlight points of confrontation between the regime's pro-family discourse and its practices of social intervention, as well as between its welfare and penal policies.

In reality, when adult exiles became debilitated by the deportation transports and harsh conditions of exile, their children were often obliged to provide and care for them. In such circumstances, as many sources demonstrate, the children assumed 'grown-up' roles in the family. Secondly, therefore, the study of displaced children focuses attention on these subjects' specific responses to deportation and the disciplinary structures of life in exile. Wittingly or not, children often tested the limits of the Soviet system by adopting behavioural strategies that circumvented, subverted and exposed its ideological fallacies and administrative contradictions. Children's accounts of life in exile show complex processes of identity-building that need to be studied along experiences of other marginal groups. To paraphrase Katherine Jolluck, who wrote about women in Soviet exile, the testimonies of children can be read as stories of how they strove to create their private and familiar world under conditions of displacement.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, unlike their adult relatives, displaced children had little or no experience of normal sedentary life. Their experience is made unique by the fact that their notions of themselves, homeland and society were formed in exile. Examining how the Soviet repressive system treated child deportees, as well as investigating their responses, can be an informative means of shedding light generally on the political system.

In the interwar period, Lithuania as an independent state had developed a strong political and ethnic identity of its own. After the Soviet Union's invasion and occupation of the Baltic States in 1940, Moscow expended much energy trying to integrate the western non-Russian areas into its territory. Mass deportations were central to this policy of borderland integration. According to one estimate, the arrests and deportations that took place in the Baltic States, eastern regions of Poland, Moldova, and Bukovina, from April 1940 to June 1941, swept into the Soviet interior about 438,000

<sup>1</sup> Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), p. 20.

individuals.<sup>4</sup> The second wave of displacement that continued between 1945 and 1953 forced into exile and camps another 256,000 people from the Baltics alone.<sup>5</sup> In Lithuania, about 17,500 people were deported in 1941 and about 132,000 during 1945–1953.<sup>6</sup> Among them there were about 39,000 children.<sup>7</sup>

With reference to the Lithuanian children in exile, this study is particularly concerned to explore the relationship between displacement and ethnicity. If ethnic identity, as many social scientists claim, is socially constructed and culturally transmitted through the interaction between the individual and the wider co-ethnic community, how then does displacement affect the construction of identity?<sup>8</sup> Uprooted from their ethnic social environment early in their lives, how did the Lithuanian children interpret the motives and experiences of their exile? How did displacement shape their perceptions of homeland? What role did ethnicity play in their strategies of survival and the formation of their identities in exile?

This chapter is also concerned to examine children's subjective experiences of displacement as represented in their exile diaries and memoirs. In 1989, the Lithuanian Archive of Exile [Lietuvių tremties archyvas] published a collection of memoirs by seven people who as children or teenagers had been deported between 1941 and 1953 from Lithuania to Soviet Russia.<sup>9</sup> This anthology, as well as writings by other former Lithuanian child deportees published during the 1990s and most recently, served as principal sources for this study.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, most of

<sup>4</sup> Terry Martin, 'Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies: Patterns, Causes, Consequences', in Myron Weiner, ed., *Demography and National Security* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), p. 323.

<sup>5</sup> Vladimir N. Zemskov, 'Prinuditelnye migratsii iz Pribaltiki v 1940–1950 godakh', *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, Nr. 1, 1993, pp. 4–19. Also quoted in Martin, 'Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies', p. 324.

<sup>6</sup> Arvydas Anušauskas, *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas, 1940–1958 metai* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996), p. 403.

<sup>7</sup> This figure is based on the estimates of V. N. Zemskov (the data for 1945–1951) and L. Kerulis (the data for 1941). See, Vladimir N. Zemskov, 'Masovoe osvobozhdenie spetsposelentsev i silsnykh, 1954–1960', *Sociologicheskie issledovaniia*, 1991, Nr. 1, 1991, pp. 5–26; Leonardas Kerulis, *A Registry of Deported Lithuanians* (Chicago: Pasaulio lietuvių archyvas, 1981), p. 518. See also most recent data provided in Arvydas Anušauskas, *Tėronas: 1940–1958* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2012), p. 279.

<sup>8</sup> Arash Abizadeh, 'Ethnicity, Race, and a Possible Humanity', *World Order*, Vol. 33, Nr. 1 (2001), pp. 23–34; Joan Ferrante, Prince Browne, eds, *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United States* (New York: Longman, 1998); Franke Wilmer, 'Identity, Culture and Historicity: the Social Construction of Ethnicity in the Balkans', *World Affairs*, Vol. 160, Nr. 1 (Summer 1997), pp. 3–14; Fredrick Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1969).

<sup>9</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo žiemo žemėje*.

<sup>10</sup> Irena Kurtinaitytė, (ed.), *Sibiro vaikai: Lietuvos vaikų tremtinių atsiminimai* (Kaunas: Naujasis Lankas, 2011); Stanislovas Abramavičius, *Tremties vaikai*, (Kaunas: Lietuvos politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga, 2012); Elena Stulgienė (ed.), *Tremties dienoraščiai: Bliūdžių šeimos tragedija* (Vilnius: LGGTC, 2011).

these testimonies were written from the perspective of adulthood, having been composed in the decades following return from exile, although some contain entries in diary style, suggesting that their authors referred to, or directly incorporated, material from their own childhood journals. The retrospective adult standpoint naturally imposes specific narrative tropes on the representation of early experiences, in particular, an emphasis on the collective suffering of the ethnic community, which imparts a wider meaning to the child's more inchoate, more personalised impressions. I discuss this later in this chapter, with reference to Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs, which exist in two versions, one written immediately during her displacement, the other from the perspective of mature adulthood.

In addition, the reader should be aware that most of these exile accounts were written in the post-1990 political context of independent Lithuania which imposed on them certain generic features. Principal among these is an emphasis on ethnicity and on collective above individual suffering. In their accounts, the personal injustices suffered by Lithuanian deportees are greatly reinforced, and sometimes overshadowed, by the communal hostility they felt towards the Soviet regime and their loyalty towards independent Lithuania. At the same time the new Lithuanian political elite used these narratives as political tools in their struggle to re-establish and consolidate national independence.

Nevertheless, my contention here is that all these works, which recount childhood perceptions and experiences in often minute detail, are able to convey an intense immediacy to events described, as well as vividly to communicate the psychological, emotional and material dislocations, dilemmas and challenges that their subjects faced during the years of the deportation. Reading them as a *corpus*, it is also possible, to some extent, to identify the principal elements of the retrospective framework, and to 'see through' the adult apparatus into the child's own cognition of their world of displacement. It would be a great misconception to treat these accounts purely as a product of the political context of the 1990s when they were written.

The first part of this essay briefly examines the scale, motives, and character of the two major Soviet deportations from Lithuania in 1941 and 1945–1953, and the place of children in them. The next two sections discuss children's experiences in the Gulag with an emphasis on their survival strategies and the meanings of ethnicity for their identities.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> In this chapter the use of the term 'Gulag' does not follow the narrow definition of the GULAG as a Soviet system of labour camps and prisons (*Gosudarstvenoe Upravlenie Lagerей*). It follows the modern usage of the 'Gulag' as the whole Soviet system of forced labour including all types of camps, prisons and

## Children in Soviet Deportations from Lithuania, 1941–1953

In Lithuania, the first Soviet mass deportation that started in the early hours of Saturday, 14 June 1941 and continued until 17 June, swept into exile about 17,500 people.<sup>12</sup> Among the deported, 70 percent were Lithuanians, 17.7 percent Poles, 9.2 percent Jews and 2 percent Russians. Social groups targeted most severely were farmers (29%), former state officials (16.8%), workers (14.2%), housewives (10.7%), and teachers (8.7%).<sup>13</sup>

There were about 5,500 children among the first contingent of Lithuanian deportees (see Table 1). According to Leonardas Kerulis, these included 965 children under four years of age; 1,918 between five and ten; and 2,276 between eleven and eighteen. Almost all of them were deported as family members of 'enemies of the Soviet state,' as defined by Soviet juridical and administrative classifications of the new borderland populations. The Soviet regime was in fact concerned principally to integrate the newly acquired East European territories into state territory by cleansing them of all population groups potentially harmful to the Soviet regime: security and Sovietization were the primary motives for the forced resettlements.<sup>14</sup> Criteria for selecting those to be deported were loose – social status and political views obviously were important, but many were expelled on the basis of their ethnicity alone, their religious affiliation, or simply family ties.<sup>15</sup> The sweeping, pre-emptive nature of this borderlands purge dictated the logic of including minors among the so-called 'dangerous elements.'

special exile settlements for men, women and children (*spetsposeleniia*). The majority of the Lithuanian child deportees found themselves in these special settlements. Political prisoners were kept mostly in camps and prisons, while deportees were placed in special settlements.

<sup>12</sup> Arvydas Anušauskas, '1998 m. duomenys', in Ignatavičius L., I., ed., *Lietuvos naikinimas ir tautos kova* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1999), p. 577; Kerulis, *A Registry of Deported Lithuanians*, p. 517; Eugenijus Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais* [Deportations of the Population in Lithuania, 1940–1941 and 1945–1953] (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1996), p. 141; Anušauskas, *Terroras, 1940–1958*, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Birutė Burauskaitė (ed.), *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Spauda, 1992), pp. 782–784.

<sup>14</sup> Martin, 'Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies: Patterns, Causes, Consequences', p. 322; Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), pp. 421–22; Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais*, pp. 22–30.

<sup>15</sup> Terry Martin claimed that after 1941 'there was not only a trend towards ethnic deportations, but also an increasing ethnicization of the existing special settler population.' See, Martin, 'Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies: Patterns, Causes, Consequences', p. 329.

Table 1. Children Deported from Lithuania, 1940–1941

Age	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
Younger than 1	166	150	316
1–4	506	443	949
5–10	1,003	915	1,918
11–18	1,159	1,117	2,276
TOTAL	2,834	2,625	5,459

Source: Kerulis, Leonardas, *A Registry of Deported Lithuanians* (Chicago: Lithuanian World Archives, 1981) p. 518. According to Kerulis, the total number deported from Lithuania in 1940–1941 was 19,285 (p. 517).

The second wave of Soviet deportations from Lithuania started in 1945 and continued until 1953. According to Eugenijus Grunskis, there were thirty-four separate deportations in Lithuania between 1945 and 1953, which forced into exile about 111,400 people.<sup>16</sup> Data of the Soviet Ministry of the Interior of 1 January 1953 shows that there were 80,189 registered 'special exiles' from Lithuania who had been deported between 1945 and 1949, including 20,074 children. In addition, there were 5,167 children among the 18,097 Lithuanians deported in a further operation in 1951.<sup>17</sup>

Although many victims described the 1941 deportation as the most brutal, the post-1945 deportations were larger in scale and more selective in targeted groups. Children again figured as 'members of families' of deportees, although the two main categories of Soviet 'state enemies' to be deported now became 'Lithuanian bandits' and the so-called 'traitors of the fatherland'.<sup>18</sup> The armed resistance of Lithuanian forest partisans, which continued from 1944 until the early fifties, provided a continuous fresh intake of deportees for the Soviet forced labour system. The authorities comfortably stretched 'traitors' category to include all other potentially unreliable groups as well as their family members. This post-war pattern of deportations was briefly interrupted by collectivization and the ensuing 1947 mass deportation of Lithuanian 'kulaks' to Siberia, when about 33,000 farmers and their family members were deported.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais*, p. 189.

<sup>17</sup> Vladimir N. Zenskov, 'Massovoe osvobozhdenie spetsposelentsev i sylnykh, 1954–1960', *Sotsiologicheskie issledovania*, Nr. 1 (1991), pp. 6–7.

<sup>18</sup> Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais*, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Martin, 'Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies: Patterns, Causes, Consequences', p. 324. These numbers are included in the total figures for deportees given earlier.

One of the most striking features of the Soviet deportations in Lithuania was the Soviet authorities' deliberate policy of targeting entire family groups. A 1941 order issued by the Soviet People's Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD, the political police) set out detailed instructions for detaining the families of selected individuals, and providing for their transportation, distribution, and employment in the Soviet interior. The underlying motive was to ensure that families of victims were no longer able to remain cohesive social units presenting a potential risk to the new structures of political power. These instructions, signed by NKVD Chief I. Serov 'with regard to the Baltic deportations,' included a paragraph 'How to separate the deportee's family from a head of the family'.<sup>20</sup>

Although according to these instructions the deportees' family were meant to be given 'no longer than two hours for preparation' and each member was allowed to take up to 100 kg of food, clothing, and personal belongings, in reality the NKVD and local militia who conducted the arrests rarely followed these directives. Looting, drinking, intimidation, and beating were common as entire families were arrested and deported as they were found, without adequate clothing and provisions. One former Lithuanian child deportee recalled the arrival of soldiers at her family house after her father was sentenced as the former head of a regional government in independent Lithuania (the memoir writer was four at the time):

Our entire family was deported in the early morning of 13 June 1941. Seven soldiers came, forced us from our sleep; they seated father on a stool, ordered him to raise his hands and pointed a pistol at him. They seated us four children at the table, we were crying and screaming, afraid for father. [...] After they finished the search, they piled all our books in the yard and set them on fire telling us that they were bourgeois literature. My youngest sister was only two years old.<sup>21</sup>

The Kitkauskai family were deported for their sixteen-year-old son's alleged involvement in an anti-Soviet organisation. He and his classmates were arrested in their school classroom and taken to a local NKVD headquarters for interrogation.<sup>22</sup> In Kaunas, during the arrest of eight-year-old Jokūbas Baronas, he was shot through his shoulder – shooting into the ceiling was a common practice among the security forces to intimidate the

<sup>20</sup> 'Peoples' Commisar I. Serov's instructions regarding a deportation of the dangerous population from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, May 19, 1941', in Antanas Tyla, ed., *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940–1941, 1944–1953 metais: dokumentų rinkinys* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1995), pp. 152–58.

<sup>21</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo jūalo žemėje*, pp. 188–89.

<sup>22</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo jūalo žemėje*, p. 154.



victims.<sup>23</sup> Thirteen-year-old Antanina Garmutė was seized separately from her family since her parents were not at home at the time of the arrest; she was ordered to gather her belongings in five minutes. After an attempted escape, she was beaten into unconsciousness. She later offered to buy herself out with money or gold:

I had nothing and could not buy myself out. But there were some means to do that: Radevičius [one of the militiamen] started rummaging in our things, emptied the bags made from bed covers, and then started putting in them everything that seemed to him of value: my mother's home made linens and threads of linen ... He put inside the bags different small things, even a bunch of long wax candles. I was horrified.<sup>24</sup>

After the seizure of their belongings, Antanina and her family were still deported.

There were also cases of mistaken arrest. In one instance, the Širkos family (wife and four children) were mistakenly deported instead of the Širkos family. After Mr. Širka was released on 18 July 1941, he tried to stop the deportation of his wife and children. Unfortunately his efforts came too late: his entire family was already in Trofimov, Yakutia (in the Russian Far North), where all except one sixteen-year-old daughter starved to death in 1943.<sup>25</sup>

The arrest of a deportee's family generally occurred in their home. The first encounter with the state's repressive power shattered conceptions of private comfort and domestic security. Further encounters escalated in brutality and intensified their alienation from habitual places and norms. After their arrest, families were loaded into cattle carriages (on average 30–40 people per carriage) together with their personal belongings and transported to the Soviet interior.<sup>26</sup> As a rule, women, children and the elderly were deported separately from heads of households.<sup>27</sup> This amplified their suffering: the deportees' diaries are full of references to the early deaths of small children, pregnant women, and elderly people from suffocation, congestion, heat and dehydration inside the train carriages. In one set of memoirs, a former child deportee recalls the death of woman named Žeglienė, who died after giving birth in a train carriage near Omsk:

<sup>23</sup> Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais*, p. 132.

<sup>24</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įlalo žemėje*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>25</sup> 'Boliševikų klaidų aukos', *Lietuvos Raudonojo kryžiaus žinios*, Nr. 9 (16 October 1941), p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Also there were numerous cases when 70–80 people were crammed into one carriage. See, Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais*, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> There were some deportations, for example in 1948, when all members of the family were deported together. See, Vladimir Bashkuev, 'Lithuanian Deportees in Buryat-Mongolia, 1948–1950', in R. Butner (ed.), *Russia and the Baltic States* (Samara: Zaria, 2001), p. 252.

Žeglienė was lifted from the train and laid on the ground. But she had lost blood and died, and the baby was screaming next to her. We don't know whether anyone took him because our train moved ahead after letting a military transport pass by. The dead mother and her newborn remained on the ground.<sup>28</sup>

Armed convoys were given responsibility for clearing deportees' corpses from the rail carriages; often the bodies were simply dumped on the track or in a nearby forest.<sup>29</sup> Despite the cruelties, the rate of children's death during transportation was relatively low; in many instances the deportees were provided with medical care.<sup>30</sup>

How did the deported children try to make sense of their arrest and the ensuing journey to the East? It is impossible to offer a generalised answer to this question. All shared confusion, fear, and shock of the experience, but different individuals explained their ordeal in different ways. The fact that most of them described their exile experiences when they were adults, however, did impose a specific narrative framework on their accounts, most commonly that of the collective suffering of their entire ethnic group. Antanina Garmutė, deported at the age of thirteen without her parents, described her journey into exile as a collective experience:

... Our transport was again and again passed by other deportation trains that had left after ours. 'People', someone said, 'the whole of Lithuania is travelling!' My fading consciousness was suddenly penetrated by a thought: 'If the whole of Lithuania, then all the trains will be full of my relatives! ... It is then worth living. I'm not afraid even being shot with my people!'<sup>31</sup>

If the suffering was understood as an ordeal that had befallen the entire community, it could give some individuals a meaning and the motivation to survive. For some, personal misery became less significant in the context of the suffering of their entire people.

The deportations represented a break in childhood time, while physical displacement also meant forced abandonment of traditional places of comfort – home and the native social and cultural milieu. Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, deported at the age of fourteen, eight years later wrote an account in which she vividly characterised her journey to Siberia as the end of her childhood:

<sup>28</sup> A. Andriukaitis, 'Pasmerktieji' in Eugenijus Ignatavičius (ed.), *Kryžius šlaurėje* (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1992), p. 252.

<sup>29</sup> Jūzefas Lupeikytė, *Karlagas* (Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1993), p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Bashkuev, 'Lithuanian Deportees in Buryat-Mongolia, 1948–1950', p. 253.

<sup>31</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo jėlo žemėje*, p. 57.

I can feel that one stage of my life is over. Period. From now on there will start a new one, unclear and frightening ... The struggle for life is starting, Dalia. Gymnasium, childhood, fun, jokes, theatre and girlfriends – all are the past. You are already an adult. You are already fourteen. ... The first act of my life struggle is on.<sup>12</sup>

For Grinkevičiūtė and others who chose to interpret this ordeal from an individual rather than collective perspective, their journey into exile served as a 'right of passage' into adulthood. But the transition had to take place swiftly, those who were still too young had to grow up or perish. Nevertheless, the abandonment of childhood space and time did not by itself provide the children with a basis for developing new identities. Their exile identity, in other words, was not only formed by loss, but shaped, hardened, and tested by their everyday life in the Gulag.

### Strategies of Survival

What do the children's memoirs tell about their survival strategies in exile? How did they manage to adjust to forced labour and the Soviet administrative system in the Gulag?

After her arrest in 1941 at the age of fourteen, Dalia Grinkevičiūtė was deported to a forced labour settlement in eastern Siberia. In 1949 she managed to escape to Lithuania and wrote a memoir of her displacement. She was caught in 1951 and sent back to Siberia again. Before her second arrest, she buried the manuscript of her memoir in a garden. Thinking it lost, she wrote a second version thirty years later. However in 1991, three years after Grinkevičiūtė's death, the early memoir was fortuitously unearthed. This find, which coincided with the nationalist revival that led to Lithuania's independence the previous year, produced a shock in society and opened a public debate on the Gulag's victims. As a result, numerous other deportees' memoirs came to light. Vytautas Landsbergis, a political leader of the Lithuanian national movement, described Grinkevičiūtė's memoir as fulfilling 'a duty ... to testify in the court of humanity, a court to judge Communism'.<sup>13</sup> Extracts of her writings were included in educational programmes for Lithuanian secondary schools.

At the same time some former deportees asserted publicly that Grinkevičiūtė's memoir did not accurately reflect their own

<sup>12</sup> Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 1997), p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Vytautas Landsbergis, 'A Piercing Light' in Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland* (Vilnius: Vilsa, 2002), p. 5.

experiences. Arvydas Vilkaitis, who was interned at the same Gulag camp, claimed that her narrative was inaccurate and even unethical. He stated that 'her early memoir was written hurriedly' and that 'her teen imagination processed secondary things in a peculiar way'.<sup>34</sup> He was most upset by her critical judgement of other Lithuanian deportees, her depictions of their moral degradation, corruption, and egoism. He claimed that her perspective was egotistical and failed to convey the shared experience of the deportees. Other former deportees, however, defended Grinkevičiūtė's memoir, arguing that it was precisely the subjective and self-expressive nature of her work that made it uniquely capable of communicating what they had undergone and how they had survived in the Gulag.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, Grinkevičiūtė's testimony is exceptional because she vividly and without patriotic pathos describes the dehumanizing effect that the Gulag had both on the perpetrators and its victims. In her youth Grinkevičiūtė evidently did not feel constrained by the need to tell her personal story from the perspective of collective suffering of the entire ethnic community of deportees. Instead, she described it from a perspective of a displaced teenage girl with a strong individual voice, a child whose childhood has been stolen.

Ethnicity in her early memoir serves as a unifying bond among the deportees mostly in situations where at least some semblance of normal social life is still possible. For example, Dalia is deeply moved by the collective singing of Lithuanian deportees on the shores of the River Angara. ('A song would unite us, would make us stronger, as if telling us that we will have to suffer much, but Lithuania's children must endure'.<sup>36</sup>) But she discovers that the ethnic, cultural, and even religious bonds that unite the Lithuanians may dissolve under the extreme conditions of the Gulag's inferno. Thus she is ironic about those Lithuanian women deportees who try to save themselves from starvation by entering into sexual relations with Soviet administrators, guards, and workers:

... I pretend that I sleep as I watch how Štarienė is flirting with a soldier. She is a very pious woman, or at least wants to make such an impression, a true patriot. If she hears anywhere how a child sings a Russian song, she smiles contemptuously and reproaches the parents.

<sup>34</sup> Arvydas Vilkaitis, *Gyvensim* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 1999), pp. 412–13.

<sup>35</sup> Violeta Davoliūnė, *Testimony: from the Poetics of Place to the Politics of Memory*. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis (University of Toronto, 2005), pp. 45–65; Marius Ivaškevičius, 'Meno Pauzė', *Šiaurės Atėnai*, Nr. 643 (8 March 2003), p. 37.

<sup>36</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 43.

Meanwhile, she is making out with NKVD men and Russians. ... She is beautiful, but absolutely mischievous. She smiles to a Russian, and he is touching her and laying her down. When she talks about her husband Bronius who is in camps, it seems real tears are running from her blue eyes. She is a Jesuit.<sup>37</sup>

Grinkevičiūtė ridicules deportees' hypocrisy and their attempts to moralize others. At the same time she is aware that their unethical behaviour is produced by the extreme circumstances ('they could not be accused of depravity, because all instincts had been already atrophied by hunger'<sup>38</sup>). The plight of women forces her to rethink her childhood notions of ethical behaviour in the middle of the complex social network of the adults' world of camps. In the face of this ordeal, collective notions of suffering are being replaced by the individual's will to survive and to preserve ethical integrity. This ethical dimension is strongly present in the first, youthful and most immediate version of Grinkevičiūtė's memoir, which she wrote in her early twenties. It is less apparent in the second memoir, which she wrote in her early fifties.<sup>39</sup>

According to her first memoir, Grinkevičiūtė is already aware in her early teens that it is the camp system that is primarily responsible for this dehumanization of deportees. She is appalled that her name is replaced by a number in a camp. In this anonymity, camp rules and orders of behaviour deserve no respect and must be circumvented and subverted in every situation, as long as it does not threaten her survival. Grinkevičiūtė is proud of the fact that she is sentenced in a camp trial for stealing wood for her dying mother. Standing in front of the camp prosecutor, she observes how four other detainees are lying to defend themselves ('... The whole brigade lies. The Soviet Union lied and will lie forever. They stole, they steal and they will steal',<sup>40</sup>). She refuses to lie herself and openly confesses that she stole deliberately and with no shame, to save the life of her sick mother. The scene reaches its culmination as the four accused who denied their guilt are sentenced to two years, while Grinkevičiūtė is absolved on the basis of her young age and confession.

Memoirs of other Lithuanian child deportees are also full of references to their ability to survive the Gulag by finding holes in a system built on the notion of collective property. Jūratė Bičiūnaitė, deported

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>39</sup> Both versions of her memoirs can be compared in Grinkevičiūtė, *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland*.

<sup>40</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland*, p. 74.

at the age of seventeen, steals wood from a local Soviet collective farm and aluminium plates from her camp's canteen.<sup>41</sup> A younger brother of Paulina Motiečienė, deported in her early teens, steals raw dough from a camp bakery for his family. Child prisoners in Trovimosk steal frozen fish from a local fishing factory. In the evening in their barrack, they laugh at each other's stories about how they smuggled out still-wriggling fish by squeezing them into their jacket sleeves and sneaking them out under the careful gaze of the camp guard. This enables their families to withstand scurvy through the harsh Russian winter. Thanks to their childish ingenuity and skills, children in exile often replace their parents as principle guardians for their younger brothers and sisters, as well as looking after their parents. Grinkevičiūtė nurtures her dying mother for several months ('you have to take care of your mother, to replace your father'<sup>42</sup>). She is even able to escape with her to Lithuania where her mother dies and has to be buried secretly. The seventeen year-old Bičiūnaitė takes care of her paralysed brother who is unable to walk.<sup>43</sup> This early entrance into the adulthood toughens children's identities and earns them the respect and even admiration of adults in their common pursuit of survival.

The Soviet Gulag was built as a system of forced labour, and the large numbers of deported children were an integral part of it. Occasionally, the children were organized in special 'children brigades,' but more usually they were forced to work alongside adult deportees. Fifteen-year-old Grinkevičiūtė worked along adult prisoners for eighteen hour days in a collective farm.<sup>44</sup> Thirteen-year-old Garmutė, as a member of the children's brigade, was assigned to the task of filling sacks with salt in a salt factory.<sup>45</sup> Antanas Abromaitis, deported at the age of ten, was sent to fish with nets in the Lena River and the Laptev Sea. Bičiūnaitė had to work in a stone quarry.<sup>46</sup> These children were often expected to fulfil the same work quotas as adults. Those who failed received only a small portion of their daily amount of bread, which was the usual means of punishing ineffective workers. Grinkevičiūtė describes her experience of being forced to carry flour sacks and food boxes together with adult male deportees:

<sup>41</sup> Jūratė Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1990), pp. 34–35.

<sup>42</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 45.

<sup>44</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 40.

<sup>45</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, p. 63.

<sup>46</sup> Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 33.

Men are carrying two sacks at a time. They load one sack on my shoulders. One step, and it becomes dark in my eyes ... , I feel how I'm swinging to both sides. I wake up on the deck. The falling sack has dislocated my shoulder. 'How old are you?' 'Fifteen.' 'Strange, fifteen and you cannot lift a sack. In our places twelve year olds are already loading. What a rotten people!' – a brigadier says ...<sup>47</sup>

Eventually, Grinkevičiūtė feels proud that she is able to fulfil the daily workload of an adult deportee; this earns her camp's respect.

In Garmutė's exile settlement, children were asked to produce 500 bags of salt per day: 'we would not make it; there would be only about 200 at the end of the day. Then all of us who were still able to hold a spade would be sent out to dig salt.'<sup>48</sup> In such circumstances, only the toughest of them, or those who had adult guardians or protectors, were able to survive. In her memoir, Garmutė recalls how on Trovimovsk Island (on the Arctic shore of Yakutia), after the death of the family head Baranauskas, the man's wife and five children died of starvation:

... Their eight-year-old daughter Birutė was still around people. She was asking everyone to take her into their family promising, 'I'm not going to eat much' ... After several days she was found dead on her bed.<sup>49</sup>

Some children fared better by taking advantage of limited opportunities to obtain physically less demanding jobs and positions in exile settlements. Some, such as Motiečienė, found employment as baby-sitters and house cleaners with local party functionaries.<sup>50</sup> Seven-year old Laima Viburytė was able to improve her food ration by cleaning houses of Russian officers.<sup>51</sup> Others, such as Garmutė, who later found work as a trainee geologist, were lucky to find employment outside their exile settlements. This type of work strengthened their human dignity and provided them at least with a temporary illusion of 'normal life'. Garmutė writes, 'An exile who works among free and cultured people gradually starts to think about themselves as a human being'.<sup>52</sup>

Those who managed to establish at least minimal social contacts with local people outside also fared better than those whose social world remained isolated within a deportee community. In this respect the

<sup>47</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 57.

<sup>48</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>51</sup> Stanislovas Abramavičius, *Tremties vaikai* (Kaunas: Lietuvos politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga, 2012), p. 151.

<sup>52</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, p. 77.



Lithuanian Children Born in Siberia, Taljan, 1955



Lithuanian Deportees at Child's Funeral, Igarka, 1948



so-called 'special deportees', who had some freedom of movement, were in a more advantageous position than camp prisoners. Seventeen year-old Bičiūnaitė, for example, was able to establish some business contacts with a local Russian peasant family, trading her hand made tools for milk products. This helped her relatives to survive a harsh Siberian winter.

Despite the extraordinarily ruthless character of the Gulag system, deported children were able to benefit from its educational and welfare provisions. In Buryatia, Lithuanian children who had lost their parents were placed in special shelters and orphanages.<sup>53</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, deported to Trofimovsk, one of the most brutal Far Northern camps on the shore of the Laptev Sea, where the annual mortality rate of the deportees was about thirty percent, recalled how happy she was to attend camp school; it shortened her long workday by four hours.<sup>54</sup> A few years after her deportation, Motiečienė was allowed to study in a medical school in Syktyvkar, the only Lithuanian student in the entire school. Bičiūnaitė was able to attend art and music lessons in a local art studio.<sup>55</sup> Algirdas Marcinkevičius, deported at the age of six, wrote that classes in his camp school contained 25–30 pupils. Since there was no paper, they used newspapers and wrote between the printed lines. Teachers in camp schools often did not have any pedagogical education and experience, and physical punishment was common. Sometimes this took extreme forms. One child deportee described how:

once they shut me in a special room with a small baby bear. And the angry beast started fighting and raving. I was able to beat him back with frozen fish that filled the room. ... As long as the bear ate his fish, he would not touch me, but when he finished, he would tumble onto me again.<sup>56</sup>

Often children were able to adapt to the Soviet repressive system more effectively than adult deportees. Despite heavy labour requirements, they still had limited access to the educational system, while their abilities to develop private social networks outside deportee communities helped them, and their families, to survive in the most adverse circumstances. Although ethnic communities of deportees offered some protection to these children, they also demanded the children's rapid integration as labourers and providers. Children's strategies of survival, their learned or instinctive autonomy, took them outside and beyond the ethnic

<sup>53</sup> Bashkuev, 'Lithuanian Deportees in Buryat-Mongolia, 1948–1950', p. 260.

<sup>54</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 63.

<sup>55</sup> Bičiūnaitė, *Jaukystė prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo žalo žemėje*, p. 192.

communities to which they 'belonged'. Survival was also a function of their ability to circumvent the rules of the Gulag system. As a result, the Soviet repressive system created an entire generation of young people who harboured no illusions about life in the Soviet state. One former child deportee chose to describe her entire deportation experience as 'the Golgotha of my life':

Oh Golgotha! ... You were the first that shaped my character. This is where my determination was born. ... This Golgotha was my first life teacher, brutal and uncompassionate. It taught me to fight and to win. And here ... I started to feel a silent hatred and [need for] revenge against all who humiliate human beings and make them into animals.<sup>57</sup>

### Ethnicity and Perspectives on Homeland

If children's life stories reveal their personal strategies of survival in Soviet exile, they also speak about the significance of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds for their evolving identities. Did their ethnicity solidify their identities by shielding them from the brutality of the Gulag? Or was it something that created problems for integration and, consequently, for their survival? To what extent could children rely on their pre-exile links with homeland, and to what extent did this homeland have to be re-imagined?

There is no doubt that the ethnicity of the deportees (including the children among them) played a key role in shaping their personal and collective identities during exile. This holds true for most of the Soviet deported nationalities in the Gulag system, and is vindicated by their own testimonies. Anne Applebaum has noted how, starting from 1939, the Soviet repressive system was flooded by a huge wave of so-called 'foreigners' – deportees and prisoners from recently occupied ethnic borderlands of the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup> As a result, entire ethnic communities were literally embedded into the Gulag's social structure. The new exiles were drawn to each other not only by their common cultural, social, religious, political or kinship links, as entire families were deported together, but also by a shared feeling of hostility to the Soviet state that occupied their homelands.

<sup>57</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 116.

<sup>58</sup> One of the Russian camp prisoners, Lev Razgon, described them: 'having been swept from their own country to the far north of Russia by an alien and hostile historical force which they could not comprehend, they were instantly recognizable by the quality of their possessions. We were always alerted by to their arrival in Ustvymlag by the appearance of exotic items of clothing among our criminal inmates.' Razgon quoted in Applebaum, *A History of the Gulag*, p. 421.

The Lithuanian deportees were no exception. Their memoirs often drew a sharp distinction between the freedom and hopes of 'normal' life before the Soviet occupation and the oppression and fear afterwards. The majority of the Lithuanian population regarded the Soviet occupation of their country in the summer of 1940 with anger and resentment. A few days after the Stalinist authorities in Lithuania commenced the mass deportation of 14–17 June 1941, Lithuanian nationalist activists launched an armed rebellion against the occupiers with the aim of re-establishing an independent state.<sup>59</sup> Five days after the Lithuanian deportation ended, the Soviet Union found itself at war with Hitler's invading army. These factors contributed to the particular suspicion and hostility which Lithuanian deportees encountered from the very start of their exile.

The first encounters of the Lithuanian child deportees with local populations in the Soviet interior reveal the hostility and anger that the locals felt toward these 'fascist prisoners', as they were most commonly labelled. This is how one of them, deported at the age of eighteen in 1941, describes a deportees' train stop in Russia:

Once we stopped in a big city station. Nearby there was a military transport with wounded soldiers. There were crowds of people everywhere. At that moment our train doors were opened to give us food. The people ... started questioning the guards who we were and where we were from. [The guards] told them that we were fascists from the Baltics. The crowd attacked us with stones and demanded the guards hand us over to be tried, to allow us to be killed. After displaying us for a while like beasts, the guards closed the train doors.<sup>60</sup>

Another child deportee notes that 'local people mocked the deported 'fascists' who deserved no mercy and had to be beaten up'. He recalls that 'teenagers used to surround our clubhouse and break the windows and doors; they would not let anybody out. Once young Lithuanians had to defend themselves with bricks taken from an oven'.<sup>61</sup>

Other deportees did not show any compassion to the ethnic deportees either. The latter's ethnicity was a sufficient reason to consider them as political enemies. In one case, a group of Lithuanian children, having spent a full night queuing for bread, are kicked out of the line by other deportees ('But you are *banditka* [bandits]! You are fascists; even your children are killing people! You don't deserve the bread, get out

<sup>59</sup> For an account of the rebellion see, Valentinas Brandišauskas (ed.), *1941 metų birželio sukilimas: dokumentų rinkinys* (Kaunas: Aušra, 2000).

<sup>60</sup> Lupeikytė, *Karlagas*, p. 18.

<sup>61</sup> Žemaitytė, ed., *Amžinojo įsalo žemeje*, p. 190.

of the line!<sup>62</sup>). Some Lithuanian exiles later recalled how after Stalin's death some of the Russians among the deported populations mourned for the Soviet leader, while the Balts, Poles, and Ukrainians rejoiced at the fact.

In such an adverse setting, besides their immediate relatives, children were forced to rely largely on deportees of the same ethnic group. Thus in one of the Soviet camps in Central Asia, a Lithuanian deportee, Antanas Skučas, attacked two local men who tried to rape two Lithuanian teenage female prisoners. He was shut up in a special jail for two weeks, but 'earn[ed] the respect of all the camp women of all nationalities'.<sup>63</sup> In another camp, Lithuanian women prisoners expressed their solidarity with and compassion for a group of Lithuanian men who had been stripped naked by camp guards and walked around the women's quarters as a form of humiliation and punishment.<sup>64</sup> Yet there were remarkable cases when civic ties and the experience of shared past became as important as ethnic belonging. Eight year old Algirdas Laskevičius recalled how in Karasiuk Jewish deportees from Lithuania gave food to starving Lithuanian families during wartime.<sup>65</sup>

Often deportees' survival also depended on their ability to organize themselves in tight ethnic exile communities that would not only fend for its weaker members (children, elderly, young women), secure better jobs, and food rations, but also resist attacks by the most powerful and organized group of prisoners, the mainly Russian criminals (*urki*). In response to these attacks, different ethnic groups of deportees were also forced to cooperate with each other. Napalys Kitkauskas, arrested at the age of sixteen, notes that in his camp 'Baltic prisoners (Lithuanians and Estonians) would usually try to sit at the same table or close to each other'.<sup>66</sup> According to Applebaum, the Balts were well-organised but because of their smaller numbers had difficulties establishing themselves as a collective force in the brutal hierarchy of the camps.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the Balts often combined forces with the second largest group of deportees, the Ukrainians, to fend off the attacks of the *urki*.<sup>68</sup> Among the Lithuanian and Ukrainian deportees there were a large number of hardened anti-Soviet activists and former

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>64</sup> Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 55.

<sup>65</sup> Memoir of Algirdas Laskevičius, in Irena Kurtinaitytė (ed.), *Sibiro vaskai: Lietuvos vaikų tremtinių atsiminimai* (Kaunas: Naujasis Lankas, 2011), p. 49.

<sup>66</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įjalo žemėje*, p. 166.

<sup>67</sup> Applebaum, *A History of the Gulag*, p. 485.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 487.



Orphanage, Eljgen, Berlag, Magadan Region, 1954

underground fighters who eagerly assumed leadership of the ethnic camp communities. The criminals, who were unchallenged leaders in the Soviet camps before the Second World War, looked at these groups of 'foreigners' with hatred, suspicion, but also fear. Sometimes the ethnic deportees together were able to seize the dominant position in a camp's power hierarchy due to their superior discipline, organization, and self-support. The criminals labelled them *zlye frajera* [evil persons] and *zapadniki* [Westerners]. Camp administrations, which customarily maintained a network of criminal informers among prisoners, at times felt helpless in the face of these ethnic politicals. In Gorlag, after the arrival of 1,200 Baltic and Ukrainian prisoners, four camp informers were murdered within a few days.<sup>69</sup>

The hostility with which the 'strangers' were treated in the Soviet repressive system and their resulting social isolation and need for self-reliance in exile were one dimension of the forces shaping the deportee children's identities. Deportees' shared ethnicity functioned as a unifying focus in the face of these pressures, and their common culture, religion and language strengthened their spirits and provided moral support. One child deportee describes his personal motivation to survive the Gulag, which

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 487.



Holy Communion, Igarka, 1957

arose from the ethnic community of exiles: 'and still I had hope! ... For me, who entered the Gulag very young, the example of the older deportees was extremely important. Especially, the example of the more educated ones among them.'<sup>70</sup> Another child deportee recalls how a prayer in Lithuanian ('God, save all Lithuanians who suffer in Siberia and Lithuania...') became a daily ritual that kept her spirit.<sup>71</sup>

In many exile settlements, Lithuanian deportees managed to organize cultural and social activities and even religious festivals. According to one former child deportee, he was saved from losing his Lithuanian identity by attending Sunday meetings of Lithuanian young people who used to gather from all the special settlements in and around the city of Yakutsk.<sup>72</sup> In these meetings, Lithuanians socialized and entertained each other by dancing and singing. Those who had sewn national costumes for themselves were especially prominent. Making new acquaintances and flirting were common: in fact, many young families were started as a result of these community activities.<sup>73</sup> Garmutė remembers that at such gatherings many experienced nostalgia for their homeland, which often found voice in

<sup>70</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įsalo žemėje*, p. 171.

<sup>71</sup> Memoir of Marija Beleckaitė-Rimkevičienė, in Irena Kurtinaitytė (ed.), *Sibiro vaikai*, p. 62.

<sup>72</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo įsalo žemėje*, p. 194.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

poetry and songs.<sup>74</sup> Many of the child survivors' memoirs contain verses that romanticize their struggle for survival in exile. A Soviet writer V. Azhaev and his patriotic novel *Far From Moscow* inspired Kitkauskas to write patriotic poetry: 'I was trying to relate Azhaev's pathos to my own homeland that remained on the Baltic sea shore,' he later wrote, 'to my duty to help it, to take care of it' Paradoxically, Kitkauskas' youthful poems transform Azhaev's Soviet patriotism into Lithuanian nationalism:

But you [Lithuania] remained alive in your children's breasts,  
You shined like the sun in their hardships,  
Who can forget the first lullabies?  
Who does not feel worried with your fate and misery?

You are a princess of my dreams.  
You are the only mother that I have today.  
I carry to you as a gift my youth,  
And the steel of my hands, and new songs of my heart.<sup>75</sup>

Lithuanian child deportees' memoirs also reveal their attempts to imagine their 'homeland'. Their 'homeland' was utopian not only because they had had only brief physical contact with Lithuania – or in the case of the very young and those born in exile, none at all – so that memories or imaginings of home were often kept alive only by their parents' narratives, but also because this contact stood in such a sharp contrast to their life in exile. As Grinkevičiūtė noted in her memoir, in her first rainy summer on the shore of the Laptev Sea:

It was difficult to imagine that in Lithuania people walked without coats, that there was sunshine, summer, warmth, that there were no stormy waves of the Arctic Ocean ..., that somewhere was the life.<sup>76</sup>

The 'homeland' was associated with freedom and the normality of a civilian life. She also recalls how the Lithuanian girls entertained each other in Trofimovsk by recounting over and over again recipes of the meals that they used to enjoy back in Lithuania. In a letter to her sister ten year old Petrutė Bliūdžiūtė wished her to spend Easter

<sup>74</sup> 'When are they going to release us to Lithuania? We have nothing more sacred and dear than homeland. ... We have our own homeland. Like birds ejected from their nests, we cannot live without it.' See, *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>76</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 135.

by staying at least in her dream in homeland and having a good meal.<sup>77</sup> Although from the perspective of the deportee's current physical hardship, these stories conjured a time of wasteful abundance and abnormality, from an emotional standpoint they served as a collective framework through which their feelings of belonging and nostalgia could be expressed. The 'homeland' was utopian not only because it became a certain state of mind or a mental therapy, but also because through the years spent in exile it was stripped of specific details and drifted into the realm of imagination and fantasy.

In the end, it was not the only utopia in which the deportees believed. Some thought that the only way to escape exile was to flee to America across icy waters.<sup>78</sup> The dream of escape and foreign refuge helped to keep alive their spirits. Yet the 'homeland' vision was the key element in their exile identities. As collective utopias often originate in social dilemmas, so the deportees' vision of 'homeland' was born as a result of their displacement from their native social, ethnic, and cultural environment and the resulting crisis of communal identity.<sup>79</sup>

The constant references to graves and burial in the testimonies of former Lithuanian child deportees represent a pervasive and powerful evocation of their sense of kinship, nationhood, and territorial belonging. Most of the memoirs are highly commemorative, elegiac, and replete with the names of Lithuanians who perished. They articulate an explicit need to witness and preserve the memory of those who died in exile. Garmutė, deported at the age of thirteen, writes in her memoir:

In exile, my friends from the deportation train and I are sitting not on class benches – we are digging salt in Siberian Usol [location of major salt mines]. The salt melts in the water, but not in our memory. It will never melt in the memory. ... The memory is stronger than a stone. Our memory is made of diamonds.<sup>80</sup>

Children's ethnic identities were also kept alive by communal celebrations of different Christian holidays. On Easter day in Trovimovsk, Lithuanians and Finns all refused to go to work against the orders of Soviet administration.<sup>81</sup> One child deportee recalls how all ten Lithuanians in his exile settlement celebrated Easter together by sharing one

<sup>77</sup> Elena Stulgienė (ed.), *Tremties dienoraščiai. Bliūdžių šeimos tragedija* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2011), p. 388.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 146–147.

<sup>79</sup> Luisa Del Giudice, ed., *Imagined States, Utopia and Longing in Oral Cultures* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Žemaitytė (ed.), *Amžinojo jėgalų žemėje*, pp. 73–74.

<sup>81</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 120.



egg that one of them was lucky to receive from his relatives in Lithuania.<sup>82</sup> The parcels and packages from their families, which those deportees who resided in exile settlements were entitled to receive regularly, served as another important bridge between them and their homeland. Political prisoners in special camps, however, were allowed to receive only one package per year. After Stalin's death, there was a general relaxation of camp discipline, permitting an expansion of the ethnic deportees' cultural activities. Algis Geniušas, deported in his teens, remembered that in his exile settlement Lithuanians organised several basketball teams for a competition.<sup>83</sup>

The fact that Lithuanian child deportees continued to hold to some forms of national consciousness did not mean that their individual ethnic identities remained unchallenged by their exile experience. Marcinkevičius recalled in his memoir that those Lithuanian youngsters who refused to attend Sunday community meetings lost their ethnic identities very quickly.<sup>84</sup> After ten or more years in exile, many felt more comfortable speaking and writing in Russian than in Lithuanian. Five-year old Aušra Juškaitė deported in 1941 was able to learn to write and read in Lithuanian only during her 1947–1949 escape to Lithuania.<sup>85</sup> Even Grinkevičiūtė, who after her release maintained a position of opposition to Soviet power in her homeland, wrote the second version of her memoir in Russian. Although she felt herself part of the Lithuanian ethnic community, her education in exile made her self-identify at this time with Soviet Russian historical rebel archetypes such as the Decembrists and *Narodnaia Volia* (People's Will) rather than Lithuanian heroes of the anti-Soviet resistance. A friend of Grinkevičiūtė noted that among her favorite books was a well-known Soviet anthology of Russian juridical oratory *Sudebnye rechi izvestnykh russkikh iuristov* (The Pleadings of Famous Russian Lawyers).<sup>86</sup> Perhaps Grinkevičiūtė's case illustrates the specificity of individual identity, and her particular personal search for freedom, but, as we have seen, her exile experience had already demonstrated the fragility of collective ethnic identities in the Gulag. Additionally, an unknown number of Lithuanian deportees who had lost their relatives in exile chose to remain in their places of displacement in the Soviet interior and never came back to Lithuania.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>85</sup> Memoir of Aušra Juškaitė, in Irena Kurtinaitytė (ed.), *Sibiro vaikai*, p. 27.

<sup>86</sup> Aldona Šulskytė, 'Daktarė Dalytė' *Metai* (5 May 1995), p. 125. Referring to M. M. Vydrin, E. M. Vorozheikin (eds), *Sudebnye rechi izvestnykh russkikh iuristov: sbornik* (Moskva: Gos. izd-vo iuridicheskoi literatury, 1956).

## Conclusions

On 27 March 1953, three weeks after Stalin's burial, the Chief of the Soviet political police Lavrentii Beria, who had been involved in the mass deportations for more than two decades, issued an amnesty to non-political prisoners and all prisoners with sentences of five years or less.<sup>87</sup> Of about 2.5 million Gulag inmates at this time, more than a million people were now liberated.<sup>88</sup> Yet the large-scale return of Baltic deportees was a long-term process that intensified only as late as 1956–1957 with an order of MVD Nr. 00597 dated on 16 July 1954.<sup>89</sup> By 1970 about 80,000 people returned to Lithuania (20,000 from prisons and camps and about 60,000 from special settlements).<sup>90</sup> For thousands of the deported Lithuanian children it meant that now they could enact their exile utopia – to return to their homeland.

Although the amnesty signified an official end of exile, their displacement continued in other forms. Many even after their release felt unable to integrate into normal life due to Soviet society's continuing demonstration of suspicion and fear towards the former deportees. For instance, Grinkevičiūtė was forced out of her medical jobs several times and condemned by local party organisations.<sup>91</sup> Former exiles found it extremely difficult to register in the places of their former residence, to enter universities, and to find good jobs, new homes, or social security. They were discriminated not only by the state authorities, but also often by local population who viewed them with mistrust because they could claim back their properties. The psychological consequences of displacement and their manifestations (the inability to integrate into 'normal' civilian life, feelings of guilt, attempts to forget what happened, mistrust toward all state institutions, political radicalism) were much more serious and perhaps cannot be adequately measured.

The experience of displacement of an entire generation of Lithuanian youth, indeed the fate of all Lithuanian deportees, only fully came to light after the reestablishment in 1990 of an independent state. It is now inscribed in the collective memory of Lithuanian society and as

<sup>87</sup> Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 185.

<sup>88</sup> Applebaum, *A History of the Gulag*, p. 479.

<sup>89</sup> Iveta Skinke, 'Latvijos piliečių trėmimas 1949 m. kovo 25 d. Struktūrinė analizė' in *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, Nr. 2 (24), 2008, p. 143.

<sup>90</sup> Kristina Burinskaitė, 'KGB prieš buvusius politinius kalinius ir tremtinius' in *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, Nr. 2 (24), 2008, p. 121.

<sup>91</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, p. 45.

such is one of the core elements shaping Lithuanian national identity today. If the narratives of survival of the former deportee children testify to the brutality of Soviet crimes, they also reveal that their ethnicity, early social and cultural links with ethnic communities of exiles, and their memories and imaginings of homeland played a key role in the formation of their identities. Yet the memoirs of children also show that their ethnicity was not something 'organic,' taken for granted, simply inherited from their adult relatives, or native environment. Their ethnic identities were also inscribed on them as a result of displacement.

The children's sense of ethnic belonging was generally reinforced by the social world of the Gulag where the line between 'us' and 'them' was drawn sharply. Despite its defects, and the need for children often to operate outside its bounds, the ethnic community was a key guarantor of the children's survival. For the many who lost their relatives, the community served as a social safety net that could provide at least minimal protection in the ruthless Gulag hierarchy. But perhaps more importantly the community could also offer a certain common goal and motivation to survive 'spiritually' until the dreamed-of return to the homeland. It could become a venue and medium through which to satisfy their personal needs of rootedness and belonging. In the ethnic community they could relive and share a common nostalgia for their homeland. Yet, in the extreme circumstances of deprivation, the isolated community could also become a trap that would decrease their chances of physical survival.

As utopias typically involve a displacement in both space and time, so the Lithuanian exiles' 'homeland' became a temporal symbol of their early childhood and an ideal space of harmonious social and political order.<sup>92</sup> Many have interpreted their displacement from the child's normative 'places' of comfort – home, family, and childhood itself, as an initiation into the adult world. Although in these narratives the 'homeland' is often devoid of any specific details, their personal stories provide the conceptual framework in which they were able to interpret their experience of displacement. Perhaps it was this homeland nostalgia, not the reality of displacement, which lent to their exile identities a degree of 'rootedness,' otherwise hardly conceivable in the Gulag. Their refusal to accept various identities of homeless refugees or Soviet citizens, stripped of ethnic background, is indeed remarkable.

<sup>92</sup> Del Giudice (ed.), *Imagined States, Utopia and Longing in Oral Cultures*, p. 4.

Dalia Leinartė

## Lithuanian Women and Lithuanian Men in Soviet Exile: Living Through Trauma

According to the American historian Glennys Young, violence was at the core of all 20th century totalitarian regimes. The mass terror directed against the Lithuanian population, initiated by the Soviet government in 1941, proved to be one of the most terrifying acts of the regime.<sup>1</sup> The repressions were expressed not only by harsh treatment and the restriction of freedoms, but also deportation from the homeland, causing mass trauma. Finding themselves far from the borders of Lithuania, men, women and children were left without their usual communal and social bonds, bonds which would have helped them to heal and recover from the individual traumas they experienced, even in the face of terror. The individual, in this case a deportee or a prisoner, was left abandoned and powerless in the face of violence and danger.<sup>2</sup>

The memoirs of Lithuania's repressed bear witness to the devastating torment experienced even in the first days of the deportations. Women, men and children, left to the will of fate amid fields of ice and snow endured extreme physical pain, the jarring realization of the circumstances in which they found themselves, and the resulting psychological shock. As their memoirs reveal, deportees often lost their sense of reality as their consciousness refused to process the extent of the terror surrounding them. Former deportee O. Merkienė recalls her first days in the north of Russia: 'Some had a few clothes with them, shoes, a bit of food, others were taken away as they stood, which is why they started to

<sup>1</sup> 'Contesting the Meaning of State Violence and Repression,' in *The Communist Experience in the Twentieth Century. A Global History Through Sources*, ed. Glennys Young (Oxford University Press: New York, Oxford, 2011), p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma,' in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, Piotr Sztompka (University of California Press: Berkeley, 2004), p. 1–30.

deteriorate from the very first day in the Altai region. Having ended up in this desolate place, people were so bewildered; some lost all sense of what was going on around them. I remember Gavorski, his educated mother and sister: they offered to teach our children French and piano. The poor things were among the first to die in the winter.’<sup>3</sup>

Gradually, due to famine, the cold, illness and exhaustion, some prisoners could not even remember their own names or those of their spouses, the number of children they had or their children’s names. The loss of human dignity was unavoidable for almost all of the repressed: ‘And here in Komi, I too wanted to lick the bowls from the canteen at Labour Camp 1. I am exhausted. When one grows weak, one loses all inhibitions, shame, everything becomes focused on food... (...) I turned into a jackal, going round the tables and licking other people’s bowls.’<sup>4</sup> Wasting away made the repressed suspicious, fearful and non-communicative.<sup>5</sup>

The memoirs testify that traumatic experience changes a person’s behaviour, which was why those repressed could later be identified from the behavioural characteristics they had acquired while in exile or at a labour camp: ‘My labour camp friend Ira from St. Petersburg says she can easily recognize a former prisoner from their habit of collecting all the crumbs at the table and putting them into their mouth. My sister could also tell them apart from their glance: their eyes had the look of a constantly humiliated stray dog’.<sup>6</sup>

Violence and repressions resulted in a deep-seated and fundamental destruction of the social order. Without a doubt, it influenced the interpersonal relations of men and women and formed specific gender identities in exile, changing the gender stereotypes characteristic of pre-war Lithuanian society and creating new ones. Even though a good deal of research on the trauma of Soviet repressions has been conducted, including that by Lithuanian sociologist Irena Šutinienė, this chapter presents the first discussion to my knowledge of how deportation and imprisonment changed gender stereotypes and the interpersonal relations between Lithuanian

<sup>3</sup> O. Merkienė, ‘Pasaulis – nebe dorų žmonių’ (No longer a world for moral people), Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 278, 274–299.

<sup>4</sup> Vladas Ulčinskas, ‘Už vielų ir grotų’ (Behind wire and bars), in *Ešelenų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 230, 183–242.

<sup>5</sup> Romas Šalaka, ‘Pergvenų įvykių prisiminimai’ (Memories from past experiences), in *Juodųjų dienų sakmės* (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras: Vilnius, 2001), p. 253.

<sup>6</sup> Nijolė Gaškaitė-Zemaitienė, ‘Lageris’ (The labour camp), in *Juodųjų dienų sakmės* (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras: Vilnius, 2001), p. 526.

deportees.<sup>7</sup> The chapter also looks into the possible differences of identity of Lithuanian men and women in exile compared to the neighbouring Poles who experienced the same fate.

### Sources

This chapter examines the memoirs of around 60 former deportees and prisoners, as published in *Ešelony broliai* (Echelon brothers, 1991), *Leiskite į tėvynę* (Let me go back to my homeland, 1989), *Amžino įšalo žemėje* (In the land of permafrost, 1989), *Juodųjų dienų sakmės* (Stories from the black days, 2001), *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea, 1997), and *Prijaukintos kasdienybės. Lietuvos moterų biografiniai interviu, 1945–1970 m.* (Tamed realities. Biographical interviews with Lithuanian women, 1945–1970, 2007).

It also draws on the analysis of American historian Katherine Jolluck on women forcibly and violently deported from Eastern Poland when occupied by the Red Army.<sup>8</sup> In Poland, there were four 'waves' of deportation: February, April and June/July of 1940 and in May/June of 1941. Different sources mention different numbers of Poles sent into exile. Jolluck gives the following figures: from 319,000 to 980,000 men, women and children. Jolluck's sources are the unique testimonies of Poles that were collected by the Polish government in exile in London. Having organized the evacuation of deported Polish citizens, the provisional government encouraged people to give testimonies to the suffering they had experienced. The Polish government collected tens of thousands of narrative accounts and drawings from evacuated men, women and children. Around 20,000 of them are now kept in the archives of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in the United States. All in all, Jolluck has analysed the testimonies of 1,864 women and several hundred men.<sup>9</sup>

As in Lithuania, the social composition of Poles deported in 1940 was proportional to the social composition of the society at the time: 70% rural, 21% working class, and 5% intelligentsia. Poles, like Lithuanians,

<sup>7</sup> Irena Šutininienė, 'Trauma ir kolektyvinė atmintis: sociokultūrinis aspektas' (Trauma and collective memory: the socio-cultural aspect), in *Filosofija, sociologija*, Nr. 1 (2002), p. 57–62; Irena Šutininienė, 'Sovietinių represijų atminties reikšmės lietuvių autobiografijose' (Expressions of memoirs of Soviet repression in Lithuanians' biographies), in *Filosofija, sociologija*, Nr. 1 (2002), p. 128–134.

<sup>8</sup> Katherine Jolluck, *Exile and Identity. Polish Women in the Soviet Union During World War II* (University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Dalia Leinartė, 'Lenkų ir lietuvių moterys: 1940 ir 1941-iejį' (Polish and Lithuanian women: 1940 and 1941), in *Kultūros barai*, Nr. 12 (2009).

were deported to the most desolate and distant districts of the USSR. The reasons for the deportation of Polish and Lithuanian women were also identical – very few of the deported Polish women were themselves leaders or active public figures. Almost all were deported due to the posts held by their husbands or relatives, their social position or activities. Female deportees from Poland were sent to 33 different districts. 30% of Polish women were sent to Kazakhstan, 18% were sent to the north of the European part of Russia, 16% were exiled to Siberia, 6% were taken to the Volga region. Some women ended up in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Belarus or Vorkuta. Lithuanian and Polish families had similar experiences at the start of the occupation when their homeland was flooded with Russian soldiers. Jolluck cites extracts from the women's memoirs in which terror and despair are reflected: 'My children, it's all over, the Bolsheviks are coming.' For Lithuanians and for Poles alike, Soviet Russia was the unequivocal embodiment of an evil empire.

As home and family served as essential values in Polish culture at the time, Jolluck raised the premise that their loss would have changed the identity and self-perception of Polish deportees, especially women. The identities of Lithuanian deportees, men and women, are analysed in a similar way here in this chapter. I will discuss how Lithuanian women and men faced the problems that arose in a foreign and extreme environment. What gender roles did deportees hold in high esteem, and which were met with scorn and rejection?

Despite spanning several decades of a person's life, the memoirs of deportees and prisoners are not the same as what we commonly refer to as their life story. The purpose of this chapter is thus not to reconstruct the life stories of deportees, and it does not draw upon archival documents or similar primary materials that would be needed to verify the biographical facts of the person who recorded memoirs. This chapter has another focus. Here, with the help of the biographical method, the aim is to present subjective feelings and moods that Lithuanian deportees and prisoners experienced in exile.<sup>10</sup>

### Forced labour through the eyes of men and women

Dalia Grinkevičiūtė wrote about the emaciating and excruciatingly difficult physical labour she suffered 'in the fields for 18 hours a day'. As was the case

<sup>10</sup> Paolo Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology. Themes and issues', in *Time and Society* Vol. 10, Nr. 1 (2010), p. 31, 29–44.

with other Lithuanian women deportees, this girl worked well beyond her physical limit: 'Men carried two sacks each. They would load me with a sack of flour. I take a step. Everything turned black and I had the sensation of a knife carving across the base of my pelvis, I could feel myself swaying. I got myself together and realized I was lying on the floor, my shoulder dislocated by the falling bag. The Russian supervisor approached and asked: 'How old are you?' – 'Fifteen'. – 'Strange, fifteen and you can't lift a sack. Our twelve year olds are already able to load up sacks themselves. You rotten lot!'

This unbearable labour was understood by Lithuanian female deportees as a self-evident form of torture. Even those whose lifestyle and/or social status in their homeland excluded them from doing farm work could not avoid hard labour in the camps. In exile, women had to do jobs that in pre-war Lithuania were seen as 'men's work'. Many memoirs testify to this. Former deportee N. Krivickienė recalled: 'Women worked the same as men, there were no exceptions for anyone'.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, according to testimonies collected by K. Jolluck, Polish women could never come to terms with physical labour they saw as 'unacceptable to a Polish woman'. They felt particularly aggrieved at being forced to do men's work, such as felling trees, floating them down the river, and other acts seen as a cynical derision of their nature. The fact that deportation erased gender differences was seen by Polish women as 'wild' Russian rules of life being applied to a 'civilized' people. In fact, by 1940 work was no longer classified in Russia as 'men's' or 'women's'. Women made up 42% of the workforce engaged in heavy industry, while 21% worked in construction. Polish men supported their female counterparts' attitudes to physical labour for deported Polish women: 'We are forced to watch how they make Polish women stumble through the snow and work in these freezing conditions'. Unlike Lithuanian women, Polish women were proud to be of the 'weaker sex' and unable to meet the draconian daily norms: 'We Polish women are unaccustomed to hard work'. Jolluck states that Polish women did not even attempt to meet the daily production norms and constantly noted in their memoirs: 'We were merely weak women'.

Lithuanians also mention the attempts of Polish deportees to avoid physical labour. Former deportee Rimvydas Racėnas

<sup>11</sup> Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> N. Krivickienė, 'Atėmėt Tėvynę, šeimą, bet sąžinės neatimistel!' (You have taken away our homeland and family, but you cannot take away our conscience!) in *Leiskite j tėvynę*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 16–47, 144, 136–144.



writes in his memoirs that: 'Poles tried to get out of doing work, they used to be sick and did not meet the production norms. The Ushatsk leadership did not like them. But after a month or so the Poles' situation changed: they started getting protection.'<sup>13</sup>

Most of the oral and written memoirs of Lithuanians stress how difficult physical 'men's' work was performed by women while in exile. During the voyage from Lithuania, Lithuanian women were amazed to see Russian women pulling a plough themselves and singing as they worked ('We witnessed an eerie sight: four women, themselves harnessed to a plough instead of a horse, pulling it, while a fifth woman pressed down the handles. They sang as they ploughed').<sup>14</sup> However, Lithuanian women soon had to come to terms with performing similar tasks. Valerija Damašienė writes: 'The crate containing gravel was very, very heavy. Three of us women, harnessed like horses, would pull the crate up the hill'.<sup>15</sup>

What is interesting is that even though the modified gender roles were accepted by Lithuanian deportees of both genders, men preserved their stereotypical patriarchal perspective and essentially negative view of their fellow Lithuanian women who were forced to perform 'men's' work. Lithuanian men expressed the distinction 'men'/women' in their memoirs much more often than women did. For example, a female deportee driver was likened to a 'man', for whom 'male behaviour' like smoking was typical.<sup>16</sup> Lithuanian men also noticed the 'male' clothing worn by women. The former deportee Vladas Ulčinskas recalled women working and wearing pants in the forest: 'A young Latvian woman came along, dressed like a man: a pea-jacket, padded pants, *tūbai* [kind of shoes] and a winter cap. Men and women were made to dress the same...'<sup>17</sup> This position of Lithuanian men differs somewhat from Poles who expressed more compassion for the Polish women forced to do hard labour, rather than expressing surprise and disgust at their strange, 'unacceptable' behaviour.

<sup>13</sup> Rimvydas Racėnas, 'Lietuvą palikome Vakaruose' (We left Lithuania behind in the West), in *Ešelono broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vilnius: Vyturio leidykla, 1991), p. 461, 445–563.

<sup>14</sup> Antanina Garmutė, 'Ešelonai' (Echelons), in *Amžino jėlo žemėje* (Vilnius: Vyturio leidykla, 1989), p. 56, 46–102.

<sup>15</sup> Valerija Semenavičiūtė-Damašienė, 'Sužalotas gyvenimas' (A life crippled), in *Juodųjų dienų sakmės* (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras: Vilnius, 2001), p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 489.

<sup>17</sup> Vladas Ulčinskas, 'Už vielų ir gročių', in *Ešelono broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 226, 183–242.



Lithuanian Women  
on the Mana river, Chabajdak,  
Krasnoyarsk region, 1953-1954



Lithuanian Men at Work, Inta, Komi Region, 1954

## Gendered identity

Deportation distorted not only the gender roles that were accepted in the homeland, but also the accustomed gender identity. Polish female deportees were especially frustrated and humiliated by the fact that they were watched by Russian guards while bathing in the sauna. On the other hand, Lithuanian women forced to expose their bodies in full view of Russian guards and male deportees turned to humour. D. Grinkevičiūtė writes: 'Men usually have to bathe separately, but here everything has been turned upside down: women bathe with men. Why should it be embarrassing to see each other in the barracks in all sorts of poses, responding to all sorts of calls of nature. Whether you're wearing clothes or not, you still feel like a flea. [...] Krikštanienė is bathing her husband who can barely stand up and she says to another male deportee Grockis: If you had some potatoes or bread to spare, you'd be of more interest to me, but not now...'<sup>18</sup>

Gender levelling was accepted and unquestioned by both Lithuanian women and men. The deportee Ulčinskas was no longer fazed by the sight of a woman who had just been speaking to him before squatting down to answer the call of nature. He understood that there was no other choice in exile, neither for him nor for her: 'She had to squat down nearby to pee. Do you think it was fun for her?'<sup>19</sup> Public defecation had already become an aspect of daily life during the journey from Lithuania into exile. The appalling living conditions in places of exile also brought on the display of the naked body and changed the understanding of privacy: 'Whenever there happened to be a warmer evening, we would do battle with our parasites. I still have the image in my head of everyone, no matter what age or gender, sitting on the bunks, shirts off and whacking at fleas.'<sup>20</sup>

Polish and Lithuanian deportees had a different understanding of the male in the role of a 'protector'. According to Jolluck, Polish women hoped that they would be saved by men, as women did not feel as though they could survive deportation on their own. Lithuanian women's testimonials on the other hand mention that they did not hold much hope in terms of men protecting them, and felt responsible for their own survival.

<sup>18</sup> Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla: Vilnius, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Vladas Ulčinskas, 'Už vielių ir grotų', in *Eiešonių broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 226, 183–242.

<sup>20</sup> J. Vaičiūnaitė, A. Vaičiūnaitė, 'Kas tie 'Liaudies priešai?' (Who are those 'enemies of the people?'), in *Leiskite jėvyne*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Sviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 16–47, 83, 76–89.

Most of the Lithuanian women deported in June 1941 made the journey into exile with their children, unavoidably becoming their sole guardians. However, having become separated from the men in the Lithuanian railway stations, they felt responsible for their husbands' survival in the labour camps as well. Even though they often doomed themselves and their children to death by starvation, Lithuanian women still sent food to their husbands (or adult sons) at their places of imprisonment. From the memoirs analysed, Polish women deportees did not display similar behaviour. Having found themselves in an essentially hopeless situation with their children, Lithuanian women nonetheless wanted to help their husbands at any cost. Meanwhile, in the memoirs of Lithuanian men, this help either was not reflected upon, or it was implicitly and uncritically accepted as perfectly natural: 'Having found out the addresses, they [women, D. L.] would start to organize packages – either drying their last slice of bread or hiding slices of dried potato from the children.'<sup>21</sup> For some female deportees, this behaviour cost them their life. After having put together a small package of potato pancakes and onions for her adult son Jonas at the labour camp, the mother who was in exile near the Laptev Sea in Trofimovsk soon died, along with her younger son.<sup>22</sup>

In effect, Lithuanian women felt responsible for the fate of their husbands even during the very beginning of the deportations, as they were separated en route to their respective places of imprisonment or exile. At the moment of separation, more than one Lithuanian woman handed over her food supplies, or a warmer piece of clothing, to her husband, while she herself was left with young children to care for in livestock carriages without even a piece of bread. As one of a deportee recalled: 'The teacher Baltakis's wife and daughter ended up with us. She said how they had taken a lot of meat with them when they left home to the railway station. But upon their separation, she had given her husband all the meat and went to exile with her little daughter keeping nothing for themselves.'<sup>23</sup>

Often, even at moments when life itself hung in the balance, for example during childbirth, Lithuanian women faced their lot alone, without the help of their husbands, even though the couple might

<sup>21</sup> J. Tilindis, 'Sudiev, Lietuva' (Farewell, Lithuania), in *Leiskite j tėvynei*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 165, 146–171.

<sup>22</sup> Jonas Grigas, 'Nebylio kronika' (Chronicles of a mute), in *Eišelonų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1992), p. 345, 337–359.

<sup>23</sup> K. Puodžiuvienė, 'Vargai vargeliai' (Struggles and hardship), in *Leiskite j tėvynei*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 244, 238–257.

have still been together. Birth in exile generally was one of the most difficult challenges for young women, whereas Lithuanian men did not even appear to comprehend the suffering and circumstances faced by their closest kin. A husband and a former deportee witnessed in his memoirs: 'Genutė complains that she feels unwell and lies down on the bed. She asks me not to leave, to sit beside her. She takes my hand. Why is her hand so hot and sweaty? I notice drops of sweat on her forehead as well. Suddenly the screaming of a baby can be heard from the bed. It's midday. It appears that this is the time that our second daughter Veronika has decided to come into this world.'<sup>24</sup>

### Gender stereotypes

Lithuanian female deportees tried to help the ill and weak as much as they could. In general, in the memoirs of women, little attention is given to their own experiences compared to their attention shown to those around them. It seems as if a Lithuanian female deportee of any age felt responsible for the helpless ones around her. This was how starved and swollen girls from the 11th and 12th grades, themselves having only just arrived in the taiga in the winter of 1948, tried to lessen the suffering of the dying elderly from their homeland. Former Lithuanian manor ladies also behaved the same way, caring for older people, while another Lithuanian woman gave without hesitating the ration of her recently deceased child to a starving girl who was a stranger.<sup>25</sup> This sense of responsibility among women saved lives under extreme conditions: 'As I had just suffered through the death of my little son, my only desire was to bring her back alive to her parents. The wind seemed to die down, so I decided to give Aldutė a 'sleigh ride'. I told her to sit down while I tied some rope across my chest and under my arms; I harnessed myself and started to slide along.'<sup>26</sup> Expressions of sympathy were typical towards women of other nationalities as well. O. Sirutienė saved the life of an elderly Finnish woman who had been left to die alone in a cold yurt.

The circumstances of women and children deported to the north in June, 1941 were no easier than that of their husbands, fathers or

<sup>24</sup> J. Tilindis, 'Sudiev, Lietuva', in *Leiskite jėtvynę*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 162, 146–171.

<sup>25</sup> Juozas Jurkšaitis, 'Kančių keliai' (On the road of hardship), in *Eišelonių broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 167, 119–183; Rimvydas Racėnas, 'Lietuvą palikome Vakaruose', in *Eišelonių broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 451, 445–563; O. Sirutienė, '1941 metų birželio 14-osios žaizdos' (The wounds of June 14, 1941), in *Leiskite jėtvynę*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 29, 14–47.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

brothers imprisoned in labour camps. However, the mortality rate among Lithuanian men in labour camps was significantly higher. According to former deportee R. Racėnas, the presence of their children and babies, the constant thoughts about their husbands imprisoned in labour camps and their desire to help them actually helped Lithuanian women to survive. According to R. Racėnas, women had no other option but to put aside even a small piece of bread for the next day, for a child or husband. Meanwhile men had neither the duty nor the willpower to follow similar survival strategies: 'The endurance of women can be partly explained by the need to care for children, they were forced to divide up their rations carefully, leaving some food for the family for the next day as well. A male *dokhodiaga* has neither the willpower nor the aim to leave aside a piece of bread for tomorrow; they are completely overcome by an all-consuming starvation.'<sup>27</sup>

The repressions revealed new behaviours in male deportees which corrected traditional gender stereotypes (men as being strong, determined and resilient, women as weak and fearful) that were characteristic of pre-war Lithuanian society. Experiencing constant starvation and the daily death of their friends, and hearing of the death of their own children, men still believed their wives would help them. A former inmate recalls: 'Bronius rummages around for something in his bag amid the rags: it serves as a pillow. He pulls out a letter from his wife sent from the Altai region. He reads it quietly and sighs. It is hard with two daughters in a foreign land. The work is not for women, they have nothing to eat, and hungry wolves howl around them in the night. My wife's letter is even more miserable – our son is very ill. Seeing him dying, she took what warmer clothes she had and ran seven kilometres to Voronich. (...) All her clothes, all that she had she exchanged for food. Even our wedding ring for a bucket of potatoes. She writes she is putting a package together [for me]'.<sup>28</sup>

Incidentally, the authors of memoirs note that even the appearance and poise of physically and morally exhausted women was still different from that of men, and never reached the state of a *dokhodiaga*, even when the physical exhaustion of women resulted in their death.

Even though female deportees had to live through the death of their children and understood perfectly well that if they died, their

<sup>27</sup> Rimvydas Racėnas, 'Lietuvą palikome Vakaruose', in *Eielenų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 481, 445–563.

<sup>28</sup> Aleksandras Kuprys, 'Ar besusitiksim?' ('Will we ever meet again?'), in *Eielenų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 331, 267–337.

orphaned children would surely perish, women's accounts are rarely directed at how they themselves felt. Almost all the narratives of women are directed at 'others', be it children, parents, husbands, bunk neighbours. Having lost their close ones, women would direct their concern towards those still alive. Meanwhile the narratives of most men are concentrated exclusively on the starvation they themselves were suffering. There are incomparably more frequent references to tears, eternal sorrow and starvation in men's accounts ('Lying in the infirmary barracks, people would think only about food, starvation and death. That is why they became very weak mentally and survival appeared impossible').<sup>29</sup> In their memoirs, Lithuanian men are constantly in tears: 'I said that I was being given another brigade. I covered my head and cried'; 'I embraced the clothes I had brought with me – it was all that remained of our life – falling to my knees, I broke out in mournful tears'; 'I took my teacher down to the sauna. I found some water. We bathed. I washed his pants, shirt and shoes. My teacher was sitting naked, his jacket thrown over his shoulders, crying. MY TEACHER WAS CRYING'; 'Lying in the stuffy barracks, we would pull our covers over our heads, our coats (whoever had them), some cried, others prayed.'<sup>30</sup> It appears that Lithuanian men found it more difficult, emotionally and physically, to endure labour camp conditions than their wives and daughters did.

### Us and Them

Polish female deportees considered themselves as belonging to a higher civilization and identified themselves with Western culture. One of the main codes of the Western world and being civilized was the concept of hygiene. They looked down upon the Russian officers, supervisors, doctors and other civil servants and their families living in wooden barracks, equating these to conditions better suited to livestock. Polish women scorned Russians for boasting about their social 'uniqueness' and leading role. When it came to women from Central Asia, Polish female deportees did not consider them to be individuals at all, believing they were incapable of having motherly feelings, acting in a nurturing way or being patriotic. And it was these personal characteristics that were most important to Polish women, setting

<sup>29</sup> Juozas Jurksaitis, 'Kančių keliai', in *Eišlony broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 135, 119–183; Aleksandras Kuprys, 'Ar besuistikim?', in *Eišlony broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 287, 267–337; *Ibid.*, p. 294, 298.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

the standard for human values. To them, Asians appeared as particularly uncivilized, dark and worthless.

It seems as if this attitude was not present among Lithuanian deportees, neither men nor women. Their memoirs testify to a rather more tolerant approach to other nationalities; their attitude depended not on nationality but behaviour. For example, a Russian guard is described as follows: 'During our assignment each one would be called forward, and the look I got from that swarthy, steel-eyed Chekist was more brutal than a physical blow. It was the look of a slave trader, examining how many muscles I had, how much use he would be able to get out of me.' On the other hand, a Russian teacher was described as being 'nice'. A person's ethnicity had no impact on Grinkevičiūtė's assessment. She describes the Russian speaking Jewish doctor Samodurov as respected by the Lithuanians because he did what he could to stop people from starving, as did his assistant, the Russian woman Fania; whereas the female Russian doctor Gluško, according to Grinkevičiūtė, was a degenerate idiot. The Polish supervisor Sventickij was a man in whom humanity had been stamped out by brutality. Polish female deportees snubbed Ukrainians as not worthy of being called a civilized people, whereas Lithuanian female deportees recall them as being friendly and honest.

Other people, especially Russians, were judged by Lithuanians based on their work and behaviour. This is typical of all the Lithuanian memoirs analysed by this author. If local Russian women refused to teach a Lithuanian woman to make nets, then their warden, a Russian man who helped a deportee had nothing but good things said about him in her memoirs (O. Sirutavičienė). The same went for a Russian woman who shared two cucumbers and some bread with a couple of Lithuanians, earning herself a warm reputation in the memoirs of J. and A. Abromaitis. Russian women who had suffered under Stalin's terror also received sympathy in Lithuanian memoirs (A. Vaitkevičius). A Mongolian female doctor and the Russian woman Zinaida Jakovlevna who saved Lithuanian deportees and prisoners are also remembered in a good light (V. Dėdinas, J. Jurkšaitis). However, the labour camp supervisor Ivan Markov was called a snitch (J. Jurkšaitis).

Lithuanians viewed their own countrymen and women in a similar way, based on their behaviour with their companions. Polish female deportees meanwhile were rarely critical of their own. D. Grinkevičiūtė raised human values above nationality. She did not approve of the arrogance and scorn that certain Lithuanians felt for others: 'Mrs. Žukienė



[...] looks down on everyone, as she was the wife of a colonel. The poor dear bordered on the anecdotal. There were these Jews, a brother and sister, I don't remember their surnames, only her name – Dora. They had a windmill in Šiauliai. Mrs. Žukienė demanded they help her, promising to grant them protection under her husband when they would want to rebuild their windmill after the war. Or when she asked Adolis Ašmontas, a feeble fifteen year old boy, back in the Altai region, to collect some firewood for her from the forest, promising that he would be accepted into military school [after returning to Lithuania from exile, D. L.] no questions asked'.

D. Grinkevičiūtė condemned those Lithuanians who stole from other deportees: 'Morkutė Genė – the dirty handed girl, a kleptomaniac', and who did not side with the weaker ones: 'A Lithuanian ganger demands she leave the brigade if she cannot work with the adults: Lift, damn you, if you can't do it, leave the brigade'. She acknowledged that Lithuanians could be unfriendly and cynical: 'I recall when we were boarded onto the carriages in Bijsk, everyone rushed to get on, as if they were afraid that if they were late, they would be left behind. And that's why we were packed like herrings, one on top of another. Krikštanis grabbed hold of the handles on the red, front carriage and insistently worked his legs and torso, trying to push others out of the way and be the first to get on. It was then, standing a distance away that I understood that this man would trample over anyone's corpse just to reach his goal'.

Valentinas Dėdinas recalls when he became ill, almost all the Lithuanians on the journey into exile kept their distance from him in the carriage. However the young man was saved by a fellow deportee who offered him his baby's wrap and the female doctor Kalvaitienė.<sup>31</sup>

The memoirs record that upon arrival at their destinations, Lithuanian families would often isolate single mothers and children left without parents, whereupon these groups would separate from the rest to form their own groups. In the opinion of certain deportees, men who had been deported along with their families were among the first to shirk away from single mothers: 'There were a couple of men who rather than helping us single mothers, 'ditched' us immediately'.<sup>32</sup> Deported families did not really assist children who had been separated from their parents either. Antanina

<sup>31</sup> Valentinas Dėdinas, 'Išvežimas' (Deportation), in *Ešelony broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyrurio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 35, 27–96.

<sup>32</sup> K. Puodžiuvienė, 'Vargai vargeliai', in *Leiskite j tarymę*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 246, 238–257.

Garmutė, sentenced to 13 years in exile, tried in vain to find a family to be with. Families from the same carriage and people at the railway station refused to take her under their wing.<sup>33</sup>

## Sexuality

Sycophants and opportunists in exile were scorned. Dalia Grinkevičiūtė writes about a Lithuanian Jew Boris who was very nice and liked by all. Yet when he had his arm amputated, and he still brown-nosed up to the man who had deformed him, Sventicki, Grinkevičiūtė referred to Boris as a disgusting crawler, objectionable and charmless. Similar views were held by Polish and Lithuanian female deportees alike of the women who became the lovers of Russian supervisors in order to avoid starvation. However Lithuanian women were not equally dismissive of such women. If a young woman went to live with her tormentor, she would be unambiguously condemned. Marriages between Lithuanian female deportees and Russians received a wholeheartedly negative assessment from the entire Lithuanian deportee community. According to L. Bojarskas: 'It's a shame that some of our Lithuanian women lose their good name so quickly and still condemn others. There are Lithuanian women who have married Russians. What could they be thinking? What would their children, husbands, relatives and Lithuanians in general say about this?'<sup>34</sup>

Grinkevičiūtė wrote about women who on the other hand would occasionally flirt for a corner of bread in a forgiving, jestful way: 'The mother does not hurt him [her son] and shares everything with him. After a meeting, she would always bring him something. Once the fling with Mavrinas was over, she started up with the school headmaster Guliavej, then with the radio station chief, then with Grigorjev, Sventicki, and so on. She is not a loose woman, she just likes to flirt. And I cannot say for sure that she was their lover, though they most likely demanded it: 'Its hard, Dalia, very hard to flirt, to smile, to turn their heads when you don't have a skirt, and the crotch of your padded pants has worn through, when pieces of padding are hanging off your bum, when you constantly have to cover it up with a scarf so that the holes are not visible, while fleas from a nice warm apartment are crawling across your back. You feel like pressing yourself against a wall to

<sup>33</sup> Antanina Garmutė, 'Ešelonai', in *Amžino jėlo žemėje* (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1989), p. 55, 46–102.

<sup>34</sup> L. Bojarskas, 'Sekundinio reportažai nuo Laptevų jūros' (Sunday news from the Laptev Sea), in *Leiskite j tėvynei*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 229, 216–237.

squash them, to scratch at them, but no, you have to smile, even though your stomach is growling. It's hard, Dalia, to flirt in the Arctic'. [...] Everyone likes her because she has a good heart, and is happy and funny'.

Lithuanian deportees in general were convinced that even having lost their husbands and loved ones, Lithuanian female deportees rarely ever succumbed to the enticement of Russian men and maintained their dignity.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, Lithuanian male deportees kept a watchful eye on the women and young women in their community. In case any suspicions arose, they would savagely and publicly oppose the woman's sexual relations with a Russian. Lithuanian men would try to block the path for any type of intimacy between a Russian man and a Lithuanian woman. On such occasions, they felt responsible for the standard of morals in the Lithuanian community. Former deportee Valentinas Dėdinas remembers an argument with a mother suspected of seemingly pimping her own daughter: 'Everyone was well aware of why he (the exile location officer) was offering her a job (an underage Lithuanian girl). Once he left, the storm came to a head. The mother was determined to force her, still a child, to go to work for the agronomist, while she cried that she wouldn't. We felt sorry for the girl; everyone was with her against the mother. But the mother was stubborn. She gathered that by offering up her daughter, she would have a good life. Finally Šimbergas, all in a rage, shouted: 'Woman, do you know what you're forcing your daughter into?' We defended her, but it only lasted for a short while'.<sup>36</sup>

Some of the Lithuanians imprisoned in the labour camps and the deported men maintained an unflinching patriarchal attitude towards women. Even in the face of common misery, women remained solely sexual objects, to be described first of all using the epithets 'beautiful' and 'young': 'But one nice September morning the labour camp gates opened up and 150 young, beautiful girls marched in. (...) The men in our labour camp greeted the girls with flowers, nice words of welcome, and even kisses, as we should. (...) This time the labour camp visitors headed for the dance floor, and some even got up and danced a little. Their happy nature was greatly appreciated by the men and gave us much hope'.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, an 'old' and

<sup>35</sup> O. Merkienė, 'Pasaulis – nebe dorų žmonių', in *Leiskite j tėvynei*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 295, 274–299.

<sup>36</sup> Valentinas Dėdinas, 'Bvežimas', in *Ešelonų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 46, 27–96.

<sup>37</sup> Juozas Jurkšaitis, 'Kančių keliai', in *Ešelonų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 169, 119–183.

'ugly' woman came across as unnecessary to Lithuanian men: 'What good will they be once they're 50–60 years old?'<sup>18</sup>

However, the memoirs of several deportees (Napalis Kitkauskas, Gerardas Binkis) mention labour camp men writing to imprisoned Lithuanian women. The memoirs testify that the aim of these men was to maintain the spirits of their female friends in need, to preserve a sense of friendship and to help one another brighten up.

## Gender and social networks

Jolluck's analysis revealed that Polish women in exile were significantly more united than Polish men. Regardless of any cultural, and often social differences, Polish women tried to maintain close interpersonal relations and nurtured the feeling of being in a group. Meanwhile, Polish men would write in their memoirs that 'everyone looked after only themselves, like wolves. Personal interests were often put before national ones. Amongst themselves, men kept to their own social groups (the farmers, intelligentsia, working class). Only those who were in a group expressed solidarity'.

Lithuanian deportee memoirs testify that socialization among Lithuanians was not restricted to those of the same gender. Still, solidarity among women was more common than among men. For example, if Lithuanian men were deported along with their families, they would mostly stand only by their own. As was mentioned earlier, single female deportees rarely received any help from men with families, as the latter kept their distance.

Mutual solidarity in general was a strategy applied by single women in order to survive in exile. Single mothers with children would form families and by looking after one another's children would thereby help one another. Being in this type of sisterhood served as an important aide to teenage girls as well: 'When we were finally allowed to settle in the yurts, we all rushed into them as if they were our long-awaited homes. I had already become close to Mrs. Karatajienė's family (we got along like sisters). (...) She had a twelve year old daughter and an eight year old son. (...) When I had to go out to work, the twelve year old Matutė Karatajūtė would look after my young son.'<sup>19</sup> The same O. Sirutienė was saved from being sent further into

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>19</sup> O. Sirutienė, '1941 metų birželio 14-osios žaidos in Leiskite į tėvynę', in *Leiskite į tėvynę*, Ed. Kęstutis Pukelis (Šviesa: Kaunas, 1989), p. 26, 14–47.

exile by, as she called her, her 'sister' Ada. A hand of salvation was extended to former deportee Paulina Motiečienė by an anonymous deportee who voluntarily used to send her money without demanding it be paid back.<sup>40</sup>

The memoirs of Lithuanian deportees also refer to mutual assistance among men. Nevertheless, they were mostly one-off acts of help and not a conscious gathering into male brotherhoods. The deportees themselves admit that women would often go in tandem with one another, and this shared life would help them to survive: 'As far as I remember, both those women (two Lithuanian female deportees) were always together: huddled in one corner, later, they lived in one room and shared duties amongst themselves. This helped them to survive'.<sup>41</sup> A shared household ('we did well looking after things. Life got better') was established in Bykov by another two deportee females – Valerija Semenavičiūtė-Damašienė and Valerija Lipkutė-Jofienė.<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusions

By focusing on how the experience of deportation and imprisonment influenced the representation of gender and interpersonal relations in the memoirs of former deportees, this chapter has sought compare and contrast how Lithuanian and Polish men and women reacted to a similarly traumatic fate. As emphasized above, the purpose is not to draw any essentialist or 'objective' conclusions, but rather to highlight the manner in which gender stereotypes are created and revised under the influence of the trauma of deportation.

Regardless of how long the exile, imprisonment and repressions lasted, they were inevitably followed by trauma, as the events experienced by hundreds of thousands of people changed their memory and left an impact on the remainder of their lives. Irrespective of how deeply or radically the repressed women and men embraced new interpersonal relations, gender roles or stereotypes, all of them who returned to Lithuania as changed people.

<sup>40</sup> Paulina Motiečienė, 'Kauburėliai ant Pečiros krantų' (Mounds on the shores of the Pechora Sea), in *Amžinojo žalo žemėje* (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1989), p. 135, 120–138.

<sup>41</sup> Rimvydas Racėnas, 'Lietuvų palikome Vakaruose', in *Ešelonų broliai*, Ed. Albina Venskevičienė (Vyturio leidykla: Vilnius, 1991), p. 480, 445–563.

<sup>42</sup> Valerija Semenavičiūtė-Damašienė, 'Sužalotas gyvenimas', in *Juodųjų dienų sakmės* (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras: Vilnius, 2003), p. 148.

Jerilyn Sambrooke

Narratives of Identity:  
A Postcolonial Rereading  
of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's  
*Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea*

As Lithuania begins its third decade of post-Soviet independence, expressions of national identity continue to confront the recent and traumatic history of occupation. Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's autobiographical account of the 1941 deportations provides a fascinating case study of the dialogues and debates concerning contemporary Lithuanian identity. This chapter offers a critique of the traditional interpretation of Grinkevičiūtė's *Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea* in light of the insights provided by postcolonial theory. The traditional reading of such memoirs tends to focus on the testimonial authenticity of the eyewitness account and links the text through a causal relationship to the re-establishment of Lithuania's political independence. As an alternative, by drawing on a widening discussion about the relevance of postcolonial theory to the post-Soviet world, this chapter emphasizes the role of the past in shaping the identity of the author and her contemporary readers.

Before proceeding with this analysis, the difficult relationship between postcommunist and postcolonial studies must first be acknowledged, as a number of scholars from both fields have been resistant to previous attempts at intellectual cross-fertilization. Violeta Kelertas confronts this issue as it relates to the Baltic States in a collection of essays entitled *Baltic Postcolonialism*. In his contribution, Almantas Samalavičius notes that Lithuanian academics have treated efforts to introduce 'contemporary trajectories of analysis' like postcolonialism as 'polemics of little merit or ideologically dangerous heresies.'

This resistance is further compounded by the reluctance of the postcolonial academic community to engage the post-Soviet realm in a theoretical dialogue. The Romanian literary scholar Adrian Otoiu points

<sup>1</sup> Samalavičius, pp. 410–411.

to the difficulties he encountered when seeking to gain a hearing at academic conferences on postcolonialism: 'My appeal for a dialogue that should include issues relevant to the postcommunist world was met with a shrug or a frown.'<sup>2</sup> He concludes that scholars of postcolonialism are resistant to changing what appears to be a scripted exchange between the colonized and the colonizers, while scholars from the post-Soviet world wish primarily to assert a unique national identity, rather than identify with postcommunist nations as a whole.

David Moore takes an ecumenical approach, suggesting that almost all groups of people have been both conquerors and conquered at various times in history and could, therefore, all be viewed as postcolonial in one way or another.<sup>3</sup> From this perspective the postcolonial approach can be compared to the analytical approach of Marxism, which has been successfully applied across diverse historical and cultural contexts by the academic community. Moore finds the current definition of what qualifies as postcolonial to be unnecessarily limiting, and he challenges scholars in both postcommunist and postcolonial studies to question their assumptions, thereby opening the possibility to apply the insights and methodologies of both epistemological communities.

Returning to the Baltics, Samalavičius goes further and insists, as do some others, that Lithuania's history should itself be understood in colonial terms:

...if the past is not understood as a protracted and conscious colonization executed by an exterior power (i.e., the Soviet Empire), it is impossible to adequately evaluate the habits of thought and social activity, as well as the pathologies of self-identification formed during that period, which, though they were not as obvious as those in the societies of the so-called 'Third World,' left their imprint not only in Lithuania but in the other Baltic States as well.<sup>4</sup>

Samalavičius makes an effort to define the Soviet oppression as 'protracted and conscious' colonization, arguing that only when Lithuanians see their history as colonization will they be able to analyse more effectively the impact of the past on their contemporary life. The distinction between 'colonization' and 'occupation' is often used to deny the applicability of the term 'postcolonial' to post-Soviet states. Traditional approaches treat the distinction in absolute terms, as though the states

<sup>2</sup> Otoiū, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Moore, pp. 111–128.

<sup>4</sup> Samalavičius, p. 411.

occupied by the Soviet Union have nothing in common with those colonized by the imperial powers of the West.

As the term postcolonial is applied to a myriad of histories or experiences, extending beyond the traditional realm of the Third World, theorists have been forced to more precisely reconsider what characterizes postcolonial cultures. Bill Ashcroft, for example, argues that the specifics of a historical experience – of events and facts – are no longer what identifies the location of the postcolonial. Since postcolonialism is no longer seen to apply exclusively to the Third World, the identity of the postcolonial is no longer structural or geographical but rather discursive. Ashcroft contrasts ‘forms of experience’ and ‘forms of talk about experience.’ This distinction frees academics from the requirement of proving that the experiences of these postcolonial nations share some common essence.

Indeed, is there a single list of experiences or atrocities that qualify a nation to be categorized as ‘postcolonial?’ The focus of attention should rather be directed to the discourses that surround the diverse histories, drawing attention to the dialogue that is occurring between different modes of resistance. This chapter thus investigates how Dalia Grinkevičiūtė’s memoirs talk about experiences of oppression, drawing on Homi Bhabha’s theory of postcolonialism to build a framework in which narratives of deportation can be reconsidered.

### Introduction to Grinkevičiūtė’s Text

Dalia Grinkevičiūtė’s entire family was exiled to Siberia in June, 1941, during the early years of World War II. The Non-aggression Pact of 1939 between Stalin and Hitler made provisions for the expansion of Soviet influence into Lithuania. When the Soviets invaded Lithuania in 1940, they planned large deportations of the local population in an attempt to establish and maintain authority in the region. These deportations began in June of 1941, and Grinkevičiūtė’s family was among the 17,000 Lithuanians who were sent to various concentration camps across Russia. The deportations were cut short when Hitler broke his pact with Stalin and himself marched his army into Lithuania on June 21, 1941.

<sup>1</sup> Ashcroft, p. 12. Violeta Kelertas also builds on this definition in her introduction to *Baltic Postcolonialism*.





Dalia Grinkevičiūtė,  
1927–1987

Grinkevičiūtė's father was sent to a concentration camp in the Northern Urals and died after two years of starvation and overwork. She, along with her mother and brother, were sent to a collective farm, then to a work camp in the far North, and finally to an uninhabited island 800 kilometres beyond the polar circle. From 1941 to 1949, Trofimovsk Island was used as a concentration camp, and few inmates survived. Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs recount the horrors of life at Trofimovsk.

The memoirs themselves have a long and complicated history. She wrote the first version of her memoirs around 1950, after escaping and returning to Lithuania from her exile. Since she had entered the country illegally, she had to hide her writings, burying them in the ground in a glass jar. She was unable to return to them during her own lifetime, and this manuscript was discovered only in 1991 and subsequently published in Lithuanian in 1997 (reprinted in 2005), and in English in 2002. Grinkevičiūtė continued to write throughout her life, however, and wrote other versions of her deportation experience.<sup>6</sup> This article focuses primarily on the Lithuanian version of the memoirs that appeared in 1988 in the journal *Pergalė*. This later version, which is shorter and more focused, has also been translated into Russian and English. Since this article will refer to both versions of the text, they will be referred to as the earlier version – written in 1950 (published in 1997) – and the later version – written in the 1970s (published in 1988).

<sup>6</sup> For more detailed information about the various versions, see the notes in Izolda Geniūšienė's translation of *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland*.

The political and social context of this first Lithuanian publication has strongly influenced the reading of Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs, both in 1988 and still, to some extent, today. In 1988, Lithuania was in turbulent transition, moving towards the official re-establishment of independence in 1990, and it was in this context that the memoirs were published and, significantly, given a title. Grinkevičiūtė herself had not titled her manuscript, and since the text was published posthumously in 1988 (she died in 1987), it was the publishers who chose to call it *Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea*.<sup>7</sup> Literary critic Jūra Avizienis argues that the inclusion of 'Lithuanians' in the title encouraged readers to view the text as a statement of a shared national experience of oppression:

The title nationalized the experiences...and elicited a particular kind of reading during the years leading to and immediately following Lithuanian independence....it demanded that the memoirs be read as a statement about how Lithuanians as a national group were treated and impacted by Soviet occupation, and it denounced Soviet incorporation by Lithuanians as a national entity.<sup>8</sup>

By encouraging the Lithuanian reader to identify with the text along national lines, the publishers were contributing to the larger narrative of independence taking shape in Lithuania at the time. The deportations were framed as an example of Soviet oppression from which all Lithuanians should work to free themselves.

Some recent criticism surrounding this text continues to echo this emphasis on national identity. In 2002, an English translation of the earlier memoirs (the version that was buried in 1950) was published with an introduction by the prominent politician Vytautas Landsbergis. Landsbergis was a key leader in the Lithuanian independence movement, later becoming the first leader of independent Lithuania. The editor's choice to have such a prominent political figure introduce the text and his specific comments illustrate the persistence of nationalized readings of the text.

In the reading of Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs that Landsbergis offers, the text is seen as offering the true version of what happened. The value of the text lies primarily in its authority as an eyewitness account. It ought to be given social and political prominence, he suggests, because it challenges the Soviet suppression of discussions surrounding the deportations. Landsbergis begins his introduction with a bold, direct statement about

<sup>7</sup> Everatt, in Sruoginis, p. 178.

<sup>8</sup> Avizienis, 'Learning to Curse in Russian: Mimicry in Siberian Exile,' p. 193.

Grinkevičiūtė's intent to document the truth: 'Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's mission was to testify about what happened.'<sup>9</sup> To testify about what happened means, for Landsbergis, to bring into the open the facts of the atrocities the Soviet regime committed against the Lithuanian deportees.

Secondly, Landsbergis encourages the reader to interpret the text as an exemplary case study of how Lithuanian courage has endured in the face of Soviet oppression. He frequently draws attention to the national identity of the deportees, encouraging his readers to wonder at their admirable struggle for survival and hope: 'There were a great number of deportees in the North. The songs of Lithuanians could be heard along the banks of the Angara in Siberia.... 'Let me go back to my homeland' became the anthem of the deportees.'<sup>10</sup> National songs form strong ties in any culture, perhaps especially in the Baltic States, and Landsbergis is deliberately encouraging his readers to see the attachment of the deportees to the nation of Lithuania. By the same token, he is encouraging his Lithuanian readers to identify emotionally with the Lithuanian deportees, reminding his readers that they share the same songs.

This reading of the narrative, however, implies an historical logic of cause and effect that is problematic. Landsbergis is not wrong in his reading of the text as a factual testimony, because Grinkevičiūtė does indeed include very detailed information about what happened, but his focus on the historical and national essence of the deportation results in an incomplete reading. The text is seen to give a departure point from which Lithuanians now move. The text becomes a 'cause,' representing the deportations and violence of the Soviet regime, against which contemporary Lithuanians are encouraged to react. By supporting an independent, free Lithuania, in which such deportations would never again occur, one is seen as responding appropriately to the violence of the past. If the deportation is the 'cause,' then a free Lithuania is the 'effect.'

Grinkevičiūtė's text is seen to be useful insofar as it furthers the political agenda of an independent Lithuania, but the experience of deportation is thus subjected to this narrowly functional reading. All details of the experience that do not relate to this political narrative are forgotten or deemed less significant. The logic of cause and effect simplifies both the experience of deportation and the role of the narratives in the Lithuanian community. Reading the memoirs as a statement of national identity – as

<sup>9</sup> Landsbergis, Introduction, in *Grinkevičiūtė*, 2002, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

was done at the time of their publication in 1988 and in current discussions – encourages the development of Lithuanian identity by using the Soviet past as a departure point along a linear timeline towards independence. Other critics have developed creative new readings of the text,<sup>11</sup> but the assumption that the sole value of deportation narratives lies in their ability to provide an ‘exact’ account of the experience remains widespread.

Without denying the value of the truth-telling function of deportee narratives, an exclusive focus on their documentary aspects places artificial barriers around the text and its meaning. Viktorija Daujotytė emphasizes the limitations of this approach with respect to Grinkevičiūtė’s writings:

Documentation is an important feature of her texts, but no less important are other features, like the aspects of the writing that relate to the quality of the texts, and the phenomenally down-to-earth participation of the writer in the narrative structures. The text is based on dialogue; it conveys creativity and a striving for one’s language (including that of the narrator) to connect with the thoughts and words of others.<sup>12</sup>

Daujotytė goes on to trace the intersection of the text with existential philosophy and the writings of Grinkevičiūtė’s contemporaries, and she suggests that rather than focusing on the documentation of atrocity, Grinkevičiūtė express an attempt to look beyond oneself and to understand others. This chapter also attempts to see what lies beyond the text when the dominant model is no longer ‘testimony’ understood as ‘truth-telling.’ Focusing now on Grinkevičiūtė’s later memoirs, I suggest that it is a postcolonial understanding of identity that emerges.

To make this shift and to focus on the explorations of identity that are present in the text, I return to postcolonial theory and Ashcroft’s distinction between ‘forms of experience’ and ‘forms of talk.’ In the case of Grinkevičiūtė’s narrative, I suggest that we need to move away from the emphasis on what happened to her in exile and focus instead on how she articulates these experiences. The analysis of the later version (1988) of her memoirs reveals that the text consistently returns to the question of identity. Her concern is to testify not only to the events as she experienced them but, even more significantly, to probe how those events have served to shape her identity. To go one step further, I argue that these events are narrated in a style that also challenges the reader to consider how his or her identity is impacted in the reception of the text.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, the work of Jūra Avizienis and Leena Kurvet-Käosaar.

<sup>12</sup> Daujotytė, p. 10.

## Turn to Postcolonial Theory

The work of Homi Bhabha is particularly helpful when analysing how postcolonial theory draws attention to a form of talk rather than a form of experience. He consistently argues that the 'post' in postcolonial should be read as 'beyond' rather than 'after.' This distinction, while it may seem esoteric, is helpful in that it encourages a critic to see how a text is speaking through the colonial experience. The discourse as encountered in the present is constantly in dialogue with the past. In moving beyond the colonial past, one never departs from that past.

Bhabha argues that it is in the works of art that are produced on the periphery of a culture – by the transients, the migrants, the marginalized – where one most clearly sees how an artist is able to move 'beyond' or 'through' the colonial experience without ever departing from it. The creative act does not reject the past, but rather brings it into the present:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present... Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present.<sup>15</sup>

If the past is not simply the social cause for a text but rather works to interrupt the performance of the present, then it becomes possible to interpret Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs as something more than a statement defining Lithuanian identity in opposition to Soviet mistreatment. She is calling the past – the experiences of deportation – into the present, providing insight for the reader on how these experiences have shaped her as narrator. The narrative voice and the structure of the text also create the effect of posing this question of identity to the reader. By drawing the past into the present in this manner, the reader is challenged to acknowledge that she or he, like Grinkevičiūtė, never departs from that past but instead also must move through it.

Bhabha develops this idea of the past interrupting the present in a more concrete way as he looks at the notion of 'home' in various literary works. 'Home' is perceived to be a place of stable identity, where one has been and is understood. In cultures experiencing oppression, home is also often linked to a very positive version of the past – a life before oppression. In Grinkevičiūtė's case, home is understandably tied to freedom. Referring to

<sup>15</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 10.

several works of postcolonial literature that problematize the idea of the stable home, Bhabha develops the notion of the 'unhomely' to capture the instability of home and of the past. A closer look at Grinkevičiūtė's narrative shows that home and the past are not as stable as even she would like them to be.

The word 'unhomely' is a deliberately awkward translation of the original German 'unheimlich,' which is a tidy opposite of 'heimlich,' or 'homely'. In developing these concepts, Bhabha suggests that this space between the 'heimlich' (homely) and 'unheimlich' (unhomely) is a postcolonial place, a space in which one sees how a person's identity is a complex mixture of what is foreign and what is familiar. Layered on top of this tension between the foreign and familiar is the second, more common, translation of 'unheimlich' as 'uncanny,' echoing the work of Sigmund Freud. Just as the subconscious subtly creeps into the conscious, creating an uncanny moment, so the world creeps into the home, destabilizing an identity that was thought to be secure. In his essay 'The World in the Home,' Bhabha defines the unhomely moment as 'the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world'.<sup>14</sup> In this moment of shock, the personal, stable space of the home is invaded by wider political realities.

This shock of recognition – an experience of alienation from what one thinks is familiar – is generally considered to be negative. Alienation is, after all, usually a very painful experience. Bhabha, however, is suggesting that the alienation that one experiences in the 'unhomely moment,' may also present an opportunity – an opportunity to re-evaluate one's identity:

If the uncanny is homely, what is close to home, it none the less has a tendency to morph into the profoundly unfamiliar, the unhomely, which estranges us from what we thought was most properly our own. Alienation would usually be thought of as a problem, but if it is something which is part of all experience, and is even something which might inspire us to re-evaluate our identities, then we can understand it as an opportunity. The uncanny, in other words, opens a space for us to consider how we have come to be who we are.<sup>15</sup>

It is certainly a difficult task to re-evaluate one's identity in response to an experience of alienation, but this is exactly what Grinkevičiūtė does as she writes of her deportation experience. In the later version of her memoirs, she develops a narrative voice and structures the narrative in ways that clearly demonstrate a recognition of how her identity has emerged in dialogue with her past.

<sup>14</sup> Bhabha, 'The World and the Home,' p. 141.

<sup>15</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 83.

## Narrative Voice

It is specifically Grinkevičiūtė's narrative voice that opens the possibility for reading the text as a struggle of identity. As an autobiographical piece of writing, the narrator, the main character, and the author all claim to be the same individual, and yet are distanced from one another as they exist in different moments of time. By moving throughout the text between the 'I' who is the autobiographical writer and the 'I' who is the young exiled girl of fourteen, Grinkevičiūtė creates a gap. While this gap could be seen as a basic feature of any autobiographical writing, Grinkevičiūtė deliberately draws attention to the voice of the narrator by interrupting the flow of the past-tense narrative with instances of the present tense.

These interruptions in the present tense have, arguably, two effects. First, they push the reader to acknowledge that the experiences of the past continue to define the present for the narrator. Secondly, these moments invite the reader – who now occupies this present space with the narrator – to see how the past defines the reader's own identity in the present.<sup>16</sup>

Of the several instances of tense changes, this paper will highlight only three. One of these changes in tense occurs during the description of the awful polar nights of constant darkness, during which many deportees died. Sick with scurvy, many deportees could not stand up to relieve themselves and were forced to lie in their own excrement. Lice infested even their eyebrows and eyelashes. The phrase: 'The end seemed imminent,' does not sound overly dramatic as a summary of the situation, but the arrival of Doctor Samodurov brought some hope.<sup>17</sup> For a month he worked to help the prisoners simply survive by negotiating food rations, opening the bath house, and using the disinfection chamber. It was a turning point in the lives of those deportees: 'After a month Doctor Samodurov left. We heard that he had been killed at the front, but then, maybe that wasn't true? We all bow to you, Doctor Samodurov.'<sup>18</sup> Who, exactly, is bowing to the doctor? Implied in the 'we' are those who were saved by his work. However, the present tense complicates the use of 'we' in that way, since many of that group would have already died by the time of writing. Perhaps Grinkevičiūtė means simply those prisoners who were still alive, as she was.

<sup>16</sup> For a slightly different analysis of this feature of Grinkevičiūtė's writing, see Jūra Avišienis' work.

<sup>17</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, in Sruoginis, p. 76.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

I would like to suggest a broader interpretation: she and her readers bow to the doctor. All those who are thankful for what he did – the ‘we’ who join her in the act of telling and of reading the story – these are the ones who bow. Grinkevičiūtė seems to invite the reader of her text into this process of identification with the past. Rather than ‘acknowledging’ the past, which allows a person to see the event as it ‘truly was’ and then act on it, the reader is being asked to see how these experiences continue to affect the narrator and, by extension, the reader. These events haunt the writer, and the narrative seems less concerned about ‘telling the truth’ of what happened (did the doctor really die?) and rather more concerned about inviting the reader to allow himself/herself to be haunted by these events as well.

The second example of a change of tense in the narrative voice is taken from the end of the first section. The narrator tells in the present tense of the burden she feels for the deportees: ‘The dead continue to live in my heart. Many years have passed but I can still see them... It is my duty to tell their story.’<sup>19</sup> In her inability to push these people from her mind, she recognizes that she cannot forget the past but rather must continually retell it, bringing it into the present:

Now Trofimovsk Island is once more empty and uninhabited. During storms the waves of the Laptev Sea strike the shore with great force and steadily erode it. In 1949, when the guards took the last of the remaining exiles to other places to fish for the state, the waves had already begun to destroy the edge of the common grave. It began to crumble. I am absolutely certain that by now the waves of the Laptev Sea have washed away all the corpses. I wonder in which seas and oceans they wander, searching for the way back to their homeland.<sup>20</sup>

For those who died at Trofimovsk, the only way back to their homeland is through Grinkevičiūtė as a writer. As Grinkevičiūtė invokes the presence of the wandering dead, she finds herself spanning the distance between Lithuania and Trofimovsk Island. The ‘I’ who knows those people wanders with them, and recognizes that her identity can be understood only in the context of this wandering. By narrating these events in the present, she pushes her audience, her readers, not only to react against these events in the past, but, more significantly, to see how this wandering among the dead is shaping their identities in the present.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



## Unhomely

These examples of the past interrupting the present occur in the first section of Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs. In the second section, the narrative layers another instance of the present tense with a specific reference to the present in Lithuania. In Section Two, the memoirs quickly span the summer of 1943 through to the winter of 1949, the year of Grinkevičiūtė's escape with her mother back to Lithuania. Grinkevičiūtė skips right over the drama of the escape and the long-awaited return to Lithuania and focuses much more on the illness and death of her mother. Her mother's longing to be buried in Lithuanian soil is what demanded that they return quickly to Lithuania that winter. Once there, she recovered briefly, but then her health declined again rapidly. As she became aware of her impending death, she specifically requested that they return to their original home in Kaunas.

This return home becomes the central focus of the second section of Grinkevičiūtė's narrative. As the concentric circles become progressively smaller and the two women return closer to their original place of departure, they become increasingly nervous about being found out. The danger of returning to their apartment in Kaunas is very real. The risk of being sent back into exile is even greater after the death of her mother. How do you bury a woman who has entered the country 'illegally'? After rehearsing the various burial scenarios with the reader (the longest section of text in this fast-moving section), Grinkevičiūtė comes to realize that there may be no place for her mother in her own homeland: 'Could it be that there really is no room for my deceased mother in our native land? In the cellar there is a little area that was meant to be used as a hiding place in case of war. I will bury her there.'<sup>21</sup> Grinkevičiūtė recounts in detail how she is able to create a grave and lower her mother into it. At one point, as she is picking away at the thick layer of cement, she comments with tragicomic irony how 'father did not realize when he was building the house how difficult it would be to knock out a grave for mother here.'<sup>22</sup> She finally succeeds in burying her mother in the cellar and then covers all traces of the grave.

Grinkevičiūtė concludes this second section of the narrative with another incidence of the present tense: 'Unknown graves... How many of them there were and still are in Lithuania...'<sup>23</sup> This final

<sup>21</sup> Grinkevičiūtė, in *Lituanus*, pp. 60–61.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

sentence functions as a cadence at the end of the long struggle to put her mother to rest. The statement first serves to generalize her mother's grave (how many graves are like her mother's – hidden in their own home?), and second, it reminds the reader that this past experience remains relevant to the present (these graves are still hidden throughout the Lithuania of 1988). Here again, Grinkevičiūtė is inviting the reader to acknowledge with her how the past continually interrupts the present, and in this case, it is the political events of the larger world that are interrupting the most private, personal moments of the death and burial of a loved one.

### Conclusion

As discussed above, the unhomely moment is characterized by the morphing of the familiar into the unfamiliar, by a moment of distancing from what one previously thought to be one's own. In returning to Lithuania and daring to return to the home that the family had built, both Dalia and her mother know that they are entering a sphere of increasing danger rather than a safe return home to rest. The secret grave in the cellar becomes a symbol of the rejection of Grinkevičiūtė's mother by her homeland.

Can one, however, argue that this unhomely moment in Grinkevičiūtė's text is more than just a painful alienation from her home country and her own home in Kaunas? Significantly, Grinkevičiūtė's use of the present tense in this later 1988 version of her memoirs is one key indication that she has written these memoirs as a way to work out how her own identity has been influenced by her experiences during deportation. In the act of writing, and in the decision to engage the present tense at key points throughout the text, she is most certainly pausing to consider who she has become as a result of these experiences. In addition to her concern for her own story, however, she also reminds the reader that her experiences have an impact far beyond her own self. The history of oppression and deportation is continually resurfacing in private and personal spaces, and this history is making itself felt in continually new moments, including each moment in which Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs are read.

## References

- Ashcroft, Bill, *Post-colonial Transformations*, London: Routledge, 2001.
- Avižienis, Jūra, 'Learning to Curse in Russian: Mimicry in Siberian Exile,' in Kelertas, 2006.
- Avižienis, Jūra, 'Mediated and Unmediated Access to the Past: Assessing the Memoir as Literary Genre,' *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2005, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 39–50.
- Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994.
- Bhabha, Homi, 'The World and the Home,' *Social Text*, 1992, Vol. 10, Nr. 31.
- Daujotytė, Viktorija, 'Kelyje į literatūros lobyną,' in Grinkevičiūtė, 2005.
- Edwards, Brent Hayes, 'The Genres of Postcolonialism,' *Social Text*, 2004, Vol. 22, Nr. 1 (78), pp. 1–15.
- Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros: atsiminimai miniatiūros*, 2nd edition, Vilnius: Lietuvos Rašytojų Sąjungos leidykla, 2005. Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, *A Stolen Youth, A Stolen Homeland: Memoirs*, trans. Izolda Geniūšienė, Vilnius: Lithuanian Writer's Union, 2002.
- Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, 'Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea: An Excerpt From a Memoir,' trans. Laima Sruoginis, in: Sruoginis, 2002.
- Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, 'Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea: The Siberian Memoirs of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė,' trans. Laima Sruoginis, *Lituanus: Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 1990, Vol. 36, No. 4.
- Huddart, David, *Homi K. Bhabha*, London: Routledge, 2006.
- Kelertas, Violeta, ed., *Baltic Postcolonialism*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.
- Kurvet-Käosaar, Leena, 'Imagining a Hospitable Community in the Deportation Narratives of Baltic Women,' *Prose Studies*, 2003, Vol. 26, Nr. 1–2, pp. 59–78.
- Landsbergis, Vytautas, 'Introduction: A Piercing Light,' in Grinkevičiūtė, 2002.
- Otoin, Adrian, 'An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: the Postcolonial, the Postcommunist, and Romania's Threshold Generation,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 2003, Vol. 23, Nr. 1–2, pp. 87–105.
- Samalavičius, Almantas, 'Lithuanian Prose and Decolonization: Rediscovery of the Body,' trans. Violeta Kelertas, in Kelertas, 2006.
- Sruoginis, Laima, Ed. *The Earth Remains: An Anthology of Contemporary Lithuanian Prose*, Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2002.



## Transference of Trauma and the Memory of Deportation



Violeta Davoliūtė

## **'We Are All Deportees': The Trauma of Displacement and the Consolidation of National Identity during the Popular Movement in Lithuania**

*'We were deported not only from our homeland but from our  
language, customs, religion, respect for ourselves and our earth.'*

– Vytautas Landsbergis, 1990<sup>1</sup>

The popular movements that emerged throughout Central and Eastern Europe during the late 1980s continue to fascinate and perplex. It was an era of iconoclasm, marked by massive rallies, the burning of flags and the toppling of statues, broadcast to the astonishment of the entire world. And behind these sensational images, political transformation was driven by a deeper cultural process that scholars describe as the 'return of memory', manifest in the lifting of censorship, the opening of sealed archives, and the telling of traumatic life-stories long suppressed.

Alfred Senn's first-hand account of the period singles out the publication of Dalia Ginkevičiūtė's memoirs in 1987 as an event that 'stunned the reading public and immediately took an important place in the collective memory of Lithuanians as an oppressed nation'.<sup>2</sup> Dovilė Budrytė writes that the 'political thaw... instantly awakened memories of the displacement' and highlights the role of ceremonies commemorating the mass deportations.<sup>3</sup> According to Tomas Venclova, the return of memory 'brushed aside all social and individual distinctions and ensured a dramatic national consolidation that led Lithuania into independent existence'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vytautas Landsbergis, Speech Delivered at a Public Meeting in Support of the Political Leadership of Vytautas Landsbergis. *Tremtinys* 6. 11 (May 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Senn, *The Lithuania Awakening* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Dovilė Budrytė, 'Coming to Terms With the Past: Memories of Displacement and Resistance in the Baltic States', in *Historical Injustice and Democratic Transition in Eastern Asia and Northern Europe: Ghosts at the Table of Democracy*, ed. Kenneth Christie and Robert Cribb (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Tomas Venclova, 'A Fifth Year of Independence: Lithuania, 1922 and 1994', *East European Politics and Societies* Nr. 9 (1995): 344–67 at p. 349.

The idea that the return of deportee memory contributed to the consolidation of national identity is now taken for granted, a standard paragraph in school history books,<sup>5</sup> but the actual process by which this took place has not been closely researched. This chapter takes a closer look at when and how the memoirs of individual deportees were published and received by the community, analyzes the presentation and interpretation of the deportee texts, and seeks to demonstrate how they were assimilated into a discourse of trauma based on a myth of universal deportation; i.e., the notion that all Lithuanians were deported in one way or another, and that they were deported not only from their homeland but from their language, their culture and deracinated from the land.

The enduring significance of Grinkevičiūtė's work is confirmed by the large number of academic studies devoted to her testimony produced over the last decade, including a number of contributions to this volume.<sup>6</sup> But while these have by and large sought to provide original interpretations of the text, demonstrating the depth and range of potential readings, this chapter will seek to reconstruct the interpretations that were actually made of it by readers and critics in 'real time' during the popular movement against Soviet rule. In this respect, Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs played an operative role in the return of deportee memory because they were the first to be published, causing a sensation which established the pattern for the reception of other deportee memoirs and the social construction of deportee memory in Lithuania.

In particular, I argue that the shape of this memory during the critical years of 1988–1991 derived not only from the texts written by the deportees themselves, but also and more directly from the meta-narratives about the deportations crafted by leading members of the Lithuanian Writers Union. The pattern for the interaction between the deportees and the professional writers as agents of memory was established by the personal encounter of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė (1927–1987) with Justinas Marcinkevičius (1930–2011), a poet and writer widely considered the most popular and influential representative of the Soviet Lithuanian creative

<sup>5</sup> Viktorija Daujotytė, in her entry on Grinkevičiūtė in a Lithuanian literary history for high school students, underscores how much Grinkevičiūtė's testimony contributed to the spread of popular movement. Viktorija Daujotytė, and Elena Bukelienė, *Lietuvių literatūra (1940–1997)* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1997), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> See the contributions to this volume by Balkelis, Leinartė, and Sambrooke. Violeta Davoliūtė, 'Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 4, Nr. 14 (2004): 51–68.



*intelligentsia*. Marcinkevičius helped to publish the text in the official press, thereby introducing it to a wide readership, while promoting and framing its reception through his own analysis and commentary.

By weaving the deportee narratives into the background discourse of trauma and loss that was already strongly encoded in Soviet Lithuanian culture, the Soviet Lithuanian *intelligentsia* established a parallel between the trauma of deportation and the trauma of the various forms of physical and cultural displacements that characterized Soviet modernity in Lithuania: from collectivization to industrialization and from urbanization to Russification.

The notion that Lithuanians were all deportees, deported from their land, language and culture – a myth of ‘universal’ deportation – came to be accepted as a self-evident basis for collective identification and political action. The social transformation and sense of solidarity that brought hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets was powerfully reinforced by mass rituals of return (*sugrįžimas*) and reburial of deportees who perished in the camps. The myth of universal deportation and the discourse of cultural genocide were key to transcending the social divisions of Soviet Lithuanian society and to welding the people together in the heat of the popular movement, but only for a short time. The slow unravelling of the myth in the post-Soviet era is gradually creating space for a more objective approach to the social history of Soviet Lithuania, a more comprehensive appreciation for the real experience of deportation in all of its diversity and force.

### The Return of Memory and Role of Testimony

Milan Kundera's aphorism that the ‘struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting’ came to life throughout the Soviet bloc in the late eighties as previously suppressed materials about the past were published in large circulation newspapers, pamphlets and books.<sup>7</sup> In Lithuania the lifting of censorship and the first open criticism of official history unleashed an enormous wave of interest in documentary materials about the past (i.e., ‘authentic’ materials that were not tainted by Soviet ideology or censorship), especially concerning Lithuania's incorporation into the USSR, the post-war resistance and the deportations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1980); Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Saulė Marulevičienė ‘Dokumentinė literatūra: pokario ir tremties atsiminimai’ (Documentary

Waiting for a Transport for the  
Remains of Deportees,  
Kordon, Irkutsk Region, 1990



At the Monument for Deportees, Spask, Kazakhstan, 1991

Starting in 1987, Lithuanians began to queue early in the morning to buy the latest issue of *Komjaunimo tiesa*, the leading reformist newspaper that printed a lot of materials on history, and reached a phenomenal daily circulation of a half million issues in 1988.<sup>9</sup> History books and memoirs published at the time had circulations of 50,000 – 75,000

Literature: Memoirs of the Post-war Period and the Deportations), in *Naujausioji lietuvių literatūra*, Giedrius Viliūnas, ed. (Vilnius: Alma Littera, 2003), pp. 319–345.

<sup>9</sup> *Lietuvos Rytas*, the successor of *Komjaunimo tiesa*, now has a circulation of about 60,000 and is still the most popular subscription daily.

with the more popular reaching 100,000. For example, 90,000 copies of the memoirs of Juozas Urbšys, *Lithuania During the Fateful Years 1939–1940*, were published in 1989, followed by serial publication in the journal *Nemunas*. Alfred Šapoka's *History of Lithuania*, written in the interwar period, was first serialized in *Kultūros Barai* and then printed in book form with a circulation of 100,000.<sup>10</sup>

The memoirs of deportees played a critical role in fulfilling this need for 'documentary' materials about the past. For example, the memoirs of Valentinas Gustainis *Be kaltės*, sold out almost immediately upon publication in 1989 with a print-run of 100,000 copies. However, the return of deportee memory cannot be measured by the number of copies of books put into circulation; it needs to be understood in terms of how these texts were received by Lithuanian readers within the cultural codes of the time. Studies of textual reception start from the assumption that textuality is not fixed at a single moment in time, and that the ontology of the text is historically dynamic. The meaning of a text does not inhere in itself alone, but comes to life through its interaction with the background of knowledge, experience, and the other texts, the culturally-specific intertext that the reader brings to the act of interpretation.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the text of testimony needs to be understood as a process where the reader assumes an active role in the completion of the text's meaning. Reception theory is of particular importance to the interpretation of testimonies to historical trauma and political violence, where the author's intention to intervene in history and to see justice done is so strongly marked. In the highly contested environment in which such testimonies are made, there is often a political struggle to determine their meaning, raising important questions about the gathering, editing, framing and delivery of testimony, i.e., parties in addition to the writer and reader.

The conventions of genre are also critical to framing the reception of a text, and the analysis of this chapter draws on the insights of three major theories of testimony that have elaborated the mechanisms by which the experience of an individual becomes appropriated by a collective as part of the shared, public memory. The first and probably best known is the

<sup>10</sup> Liudas Truska, 'Origins of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*' in 13 January 1991 in *Lithuania in the Context of the Recent Research* (Vilnius, Vilnius Pedagogical University, 2006), p. 158. By way of comparison, the average history book published during the late Soviet period before *Sąjūdis* would have a circulation of about 10 thousand copies, while history books published in the post-Soviet period rarely surpass 10 thousand copies and are most printed in runs of one or two thousand.

<sup>11</sup> See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978); and *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993).

trauma theory of testimony as applied to the memoirs of Holocaust survivors. The second is the theory of Latin American *testimonio*, and the third is the modern hermeneutical theory of religious testimony as developed by Paul Ricoeur. Taken together, these three schools of criticism offer considerable insights that can help to develop a framework for the understanding of the return of deportee memory as a part of the communicative cycle of testimony.<sup>12</sup>

For trauma theory, the truth of the historical event is internalized as the experience of trauma, and it is to this trauma that the witness testifies. The word 'trauma' means 'wound' in ancient Greek, and originally it referred to a physical injury inflicted on the body. In medical and psychiatric literature it came to be understood as an injury inflicted upon the psyche, and refers not just to the original injury, but to its after-effects. Trauma is now understood in the clinical context as a delayed response to an overwhelming event, a response which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams and particular patterns of behaviour stemming from the event.

In their highly influential application of trauma theory to Holocaust testimony, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub emphasize that the experience of trauma is represented through indirect, non-referential means, and that this mode of communication entails a special mode of reception, which they call 'sympathetic listening'. Because Holocaust survivors are often unable to tell their story in a coherent narrative, the listener is required to look 'behind' what is being said to understand the original trauma.<sup>13</sup>

The understanding of trauma as mode of communication, as the transmission of an experience that is prior to thought and language, is fundamental to this approach to testimony, where the notion of 'secondary witnessing' takes on a key role in the receiving and passing on the message that inheres in the original event to an increasingly broad circle of witnesses. For Cathy Caruth, trauma is transmitted from speaker to listener, and from that listener/speaker to another listener as a sort of 'contagion'. Projecting the model of traumatic communication from the clinical to the cultural sphere, she suggests that testimony can play a role in post-conflict situations in reconciling individuals and communities that have been alienated from

<sup>12</sup> Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler, *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Georg Gugleberger (ed.) *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. (Durham: Duke UP, 1996); Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian UP, 1976); Lewis S. Mudge (ed.) *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 75–92.

one another: 'This speaking and this listening do not rely on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don't yet know of our traumatic pasts.'<sup>14</sup>

The 'contagious' nature of trauma and the idea of secondary witnessing has led theorists to underscore the universal or at least transnational nature of Holocaust memory. Caruth posits the experience of historical trauma, or 'history as holocaust,' as an existential common denominator among all peoples living in the post-war era, and proposes 'sympathetic listening' as the new *lingua franca* among peoples. Living as we do in a 'catastrophic age,' she suggests that 'trauma may itself provide the very link between cultures.' And while the universalist ambitions of trauma theory have been subject to frequent criticism, the broad acceptance of Holocaust remembrance as a universal obligation in Europe and North America speaks for itself.

Meanwhile, theorists of Latin American *testimonio* have by and large rejected the universalist pretensions of trauma theory, which they describe as rooted in the culture of the metropolis and having little to do with the political realities in the periphery.<sup>15</sup> Emphasizing the cultural specificity of every historical trauma, they nonetheless place a strong emphasis on the collective nature of the testimonial enterprise. Indeed, Latin American *testimonio* is rarely the product of a single author, but the result of a creative partnership of an editor, who assumes the role of a *maieusis* or midwife of meaning, with a member of the subaltern community, i.e., the indigenous victim of oppression who does not speak the language of the coloniser and urban society, to produce a written text.<sup>16</sup>

In this manner, *testimonio* not only occasions the transformation of the former object of oppression into the subject of a narrative of liberation, but it transforms the very nature of the subject from individual to collective: '...the protagonist who gives *testimonio* is a speaker who does not conceive of him/herself as extraordinary, but instead as an allegory of the many, the people'. Collective traditions and memories are valorized and offered as a resource for transformative politics: 'testimonial writing also emphasizes a rereading of culture as lived history and a profession of faith in the struggles of the oppressed.'<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995), p. 11, 156.

<sup>15</sup> George Yudice, 'Testimony and Postmodernism' *Latin American Perspectives* 18.3 (1991): 15-31.

<sup>16</sup> Georg Gugelberger and Michael Kearney, 'Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America' *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 18, Nr. 3 (Summer 1991): 3-14 at p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Georg Gugelberger and Michael Kearney, 'Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America' *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 18, Nr. 3 (Summer 1991), p. 26.

The idea of testimony as implying the intention of the author to bring about a political or ethical transformation of the reader is developed most fully in Paul Ricoeur's theory of religious testimony, which serves as a useful reminder of the ancient provenance of many notions advanced in the theories of trauma and *testimonio*. For example, the idea of secondary witnessing is central the Christian tradition, where the witness attests not only to events seen but also to beliefs held, as in the saying, 'we bear witness to the faith'. Moreover, the word for martyr, a person who 'voluntarily undergoes the penalty of death for refusing to renounce the Christian faith' (OED), derives from the ancient Greek word for witness – *martur*.

Moreover, the proces of collective transformation at the heart of *testimonio* echoes ancient conceptions that link the revelation delivered by testimony to the notion of the apocalypse – a catastrophe which occurs within history, but which transcends history by bringing one era to a close and inaugurating the new. As with trauma theory, the fact that one 'witnesses' not just events but other people's testimony to events means that witnessing and testimony are points in a cycle of communication, conceived as the transmission of knowledge, experience, or revelation. For Christians, the text of Scripture is 'produced' as testimony and 'received' as revelation by the reader, who as a believer goes on to live the revealed truth as testimony, for others to witness and believe, building the community of faith.

### The Emergence of Testimony

The practical thrust of these three theories of testimony is to decentre traditional notions of authorship and text, pointing to the range of additional factors that make up the social significance of testimony as a process: the practice of multiple authorship, the distinction of the physical text and the 'text' of testimony, the modalities of transmission and the transformation of identity as an inherent part of the act of reading and writing, of listening and speaking. Indeed, a close examination of the emergence of Grinkevičiūtė's testimony into the public sphere of late Soviet Lithuania shows the limits of the traditional, linear model of communication from the author to the reader through the transparent medium of the text.

Quite apart from these considerations, a preliminary care needs to be taken when considering which text to analyze, in view of this chapter's aim of discerning the actual, historically operative interpretations of the *testimas* opposed to its potential meanings. Grinkevičiūtė wrote the

first version of her memoirs in 1949–1950, after she had escaped to Lithuania from the Gulag with her sick mother. She was arrested in 1950 and sent back into exile, but not before she buried the manuscript of her first memoirs in the yard of their house. This version of her text was discovered only in 1991, the year Lithuania regained its independence and several years after Grinkevičiūtė's death in December 1987. While the discovery of this text serves as a moving metaphor of the return of deportee memory, *Sąjūdis* had already achieved its chief political aim, and the peak of interest in the deportation had passed. For all of its inherent value, Grinkevičiūtė's childhood memoir played no significant role in the popular movement against Soviet rule, if only because it appeared too late.

After Grinkevičiūtė finally returned to Lithuania in 1956, she was unable to find the text she buried in 1950, and so she wrote a second version. This text, written in Russian and entitled '*Litovskie ssylnye v Yakutii*' ('Lithuanian Exiles in Yakutsk'), was published in 1979 by the underground Moscow-based journal *Pamiat'*. It was circulated through *samizdat*, and underwent continual mutation as it was manually copied and recopied. It was eventually smuggled abroad and published in French and English. However, within Soviet Lithuania, this text was read by a very small number of people and had a negligible social impact.

Some time in the early eighties, Grinkevičiūtė rewrote the 1979 version into Lithuanian. Her roommate and friend, Aldona Šulskytė, a Russian language teacher and a member of a repressed family herself, assisted in the writing process, not only in terms of editing and recopying but also carrying the manuscript on her person or hiding it at times when Grinkevičiūtė was being interrogated or when the apartment was searched by the police. Grinkevičiūtė called this last text the basic or fundamental version of her testimony. It was this version of her memoirs that would emerge into open discourse and exercise such a powerful effect on Soviet Lithuanian society.

Unlike the other versions of her testimony, none of which has a title, this last manuscript has what appears to be the beginning of a title. The word 'Our' is followed by ten dots, suggesting that she may have intended to call it *Mūsų mažoji žemė* (*Our Small Land*), as an ironic reference to the title of Leonid Brezhnev's memoirs *Nasha malaya zemlya*. But while the reference to Brezhnev is speculative, the epigraph just below the title: 'Their Innocence Was Their Guilt,' was taken from the poem "Blood and Ashes" by Justinas Marcinkevičius.

Like most Lithuanians living in the LSSR at the time, Grinkevičiūtė was a great admirer of his work, especially *Mindaugas*, *Mažvydas*, and *Katedra*, the trilogy of historical dramas that had gained the status of a national epic, and given him the status of the national bard. She had never met him before but trusted him implicitly, hoping that he would help bring her own writing to Lithuanians. By the same token, the gap between the two in terms of social standing was immense, and so Grinkevičiūtė had prepared a special pretext to justify a meeting. She called him several times, proposing to give him some precious artefacts of Bishop Motiejus Valančius, one of the leaders of the first Lithuanian national awakening of the late nineteenth century.

This ruse was necessary because Grinkevičiūtė's status as a dissident and a former deportee meant that she still lived on the margins of society. And even though the deportees would soon be elevated to the status of national heroes themselves, the largest part of the establishment *intelligentsia* continued to look upon them and upon dissidents with considerable irony and even derision.<sup>18</sup> Gender and professional status also raised barriers in what was still a highly parochial society. The great prestige accorded to professional writers in Soviet Lithuanian had a negative side in the derision shown to amateur writers who were not part of the club and jeered as 'graphomaniacs'. Amateur female writers were the subject of special scorn, and were most often referred to as 'scribbling women'.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, by 16 July 1987, Grinkevičiūtė had secured her appointment and travelled from the small provincial town where she resided to Vilnius.<sup>20</sup> She died shortly thereafter, in December 1987, just a few months before the first instalment of her memoirs was published in the August 1988 issue of the monthly journal *Pergalė*.

<sup>18</sup> Tomas Venclova said in 1990 that 'dissidents were considered unessential by the Lithuanian *intelligentsia*. They were considered fanatics, hollow or even mentally ill since they had a different opinion'. 'Sakau karčią tiesą (I Tell a Bitter Truth)', *Atgimimas*, 24 (1990). Liudas Truska offers a more moderate assessment: 'From my personal experience I can state that intellectuals disdained dissidents and looked upon them with a slight irony'. Liudas Truska, 'Origins of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*' in *13 January 1991 in Lithuania in the Context of the Recent Research* (Vilnius: Vilnius Pedagogical University Press, 2006), p. 158.

<sup>19</sup> The proper place of women was seen as the listeners of the delivery of literature read by men in literary evenings, poetry and prose readings and lectures. Judita Vaičiūnaitė, a famous Lithuanian poet, was told straightforwardly by her editor Albinas Žukauskas that she was too beautiful to be a good poet. 'Mūsų giminės moterys viską susikūrė pačios' in *Moteris* (10 October 2008).

<sup>20</sup> During the same trip, she also visited Kazys Saja, a well-known playwright along with his wife Zita Mažeikaitė. The couple agreed to retype Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs and they distributed the manuscript informally as they prepared it for publication.



Her testimony had a strong impact on the reading public. 'Until now we have read nothing so horrifying on this subject,' stated writer Vytautas Martinkus. Saulius Žukas described the text as the source of the 'moral rejuvenation' of the Lithuanian nation.<sup>21</sup> Professional writers like Juozas Aputis called on their peers to 'put down their pen' and 'give their place to deportee literature and memoirs'.<sup>22</sup>

However, the mass publication of other deportee memoirs that came in 1989 did not dislodge the professional writers from their positions of social influence. In fact, the encounter of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė and Justinas Marcinkevičius shows how the social and moral role of the Soviet-Lithuanian writers was only enhanced by the free publication of formerly repressed works. Drawing an analogy with the history of *testimonio*, the transmission of memory from Grinkevičiūtė through Marcinkevičius to the Lithuanian nation recalls the autochthonous tradition of the Maya-Quiche peoples, in which a dying person recounts his or her life and advises a relative or friend on how to resist the imposed culture of the colonizer.<sup>23</sup>

Marcinkevičius received the testimony of a critically ill deportee who died shortly after their meeting. By entrusting her manuscript to Marcinkevičius, Grinkevičiūtė secured the transmission of her memory to the Lithuanian nation and symbolically bridged the gap between those who cooperated with the regime and those who were brutally repressed. 'I know that you will understand me,' read a little note attached to the notebook which Marcinkevičius took into his hands.<sup>24</sup> This exchange enacted the testimonial process by which the individual ceases to exist in order to give birth to the collective through discursive self-representation.

Moreover, in a manner that recalls the *testimonio* relationship between the autochthonous subaltern who tells a tale of oppression and the Spanish-speaking editor who serves as the translator and midwife of its meaning, the Soviet Lithuanian reading public was first exposed to Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs in the form of an article written by Marcinkevičius about his encounter with her and about his own experience of reading her text.<sup>25</sup> Although *glasnost* was gaining speed, deportee memoirs were still

<sup>21</sup> Saulius Žukas, 'Nepasitikek vieškeliais', *Literatūra ir menas* (1 October 1988), p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Juozas Aputis, 'Tautos gedulo diena', *Pergalė*, 6 (1989), p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Gareth Williams, 'Translation and Mourning: The Cultural Challenge of Latin American Testimonial Autobiography' *Latin American Literary Review*, 21.41 (June 1993), p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> Viktorija Daujotytė and Elena Bukelienė, *Lietuvių literatūra (1940–1997)* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Justinas Marcinkevičius, 'Reabilituota – 1970 metais (Rehabilitated – in 1970)', *Literatūra ir Menas*, Nr. 22 (18 May 1988), pp. 2–3.

Justinas Marcinkevičius  
in a Sąjūdis meeting,  
1989



subject to censorship, but nothing could prevent Marcinkevičius from citing from Grinkevičiūtė's manuscript on his own authority. His interpretation, presented to the broadest of audiences, served to link her personal experience with that of the increasingly assertive society of Lithuanians.

The article, entitled 'Rehabilitated – in 1970' was published in May 1988, and it was structured in a way so as to introduce Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs to the reading public. Cutting through official and social barriers, it broke the taboo against deportee memoirs and cleared the way for the publication of the full text a few months later. In effect, Marcinkevičius built up his status as a secondary witness to confer legitimacy on Grinkevičiūtė as an ex-deportee as well as a woman writer. At the same time, he also confirmed his own status as the custodian and voice of the nation's collective memory, which now embraced the experience of the deportees.

Marcinkevičius begins by telling the story of how they met, how she presented her writings to him and how he expected that she was one of 'those' women writers who approached him so often. He notes how he was preparing some polite words of dismissal that would send her off to one or another editor, when the first lines of her piece alerted him that this was a special case: 'Our family – my father, mother, brother and I – were deported at 3 am on June 14, 1941'.<sup>26</sup> With the shock of recognition thus established, the article continues with an account of his own childhood memory of that fateful day, or rather night, when he woke up because he 'felt some kind of anxiety in our hut,' and received the disturbing message that the teacher from the neighbouring village had been deported.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

Having established his own personal connection to the deportation, Marcinkevičius proceeds to widen the scope of the represented experience from the individual to the collective. The figure of the teacher, the carrier of national knowledge, language and traditions to the next generation, is amplified when the narrative returns to the present, and is invested in Grinkevičiūtė: 'and in front of me there sat a woman whose father was the teacher of a Kaunas gymnasium'. The murder of Grinkevičiūtė's father is given a collective significance because of his status of a teacher. With the same motion, her text is presented as a testament to the timeless suffering of the nation.

Marcinkevičius then alludes to the anecdotes that used to circulate about how some deportees did quite well for themselves in Siberia as farmers and had to be forced to return to Lithuania, an ironic and repeat 'dekulakization'. By contextualizing the reception of Grinkevičiūtė's testimony against the background of social stereotypes, the article preemptively addresses potential sources of scepticism, before asking how such an injustice could have been allowed to happen, and by extension how it could be allowed to pass without remorse or repentance, thus turning the ethical gaze squarely on contemporary Lithuanian society.

The text then turns to the testimony itself, reproducing the following fragment from Grinkevičiūtė's manuscript that represents the experience of displacement as a defining aspect of Lithuanian identity:

Trofimovsk Island now is empty and uninhabited again. During storms the waves of the Laptev Sea with enormous force are beating against its shore and are persistently destroying it. When in 1949 the last deportees were transported for fishing to other places the waves already started destroying the end of the joint grave and it started disintegrating. There is no doubt that all the corpses are long ago already washed away. In what seas and oceans are they still travelling and searching for the path to their far away homeland?

He closes by articulating a path for social redemption. Although society has up to now neglected the memory of the deportees, and did not do enough to make amends to the survivors, Lithuanians could now, at least 'take in their souls, which is their memory'. As a postscript he calls for the construction of a monument to the victims of Stalinism. By recounting the steps of his own coming to terms with the person of Grinkevičiūtė and with her testimony, Marcinkevičius set the pattern for the popular reception of her work, and launched the process of appropriating deportee memory for the collective.

## The Tragic Symmetry of Two Lives

The political significance and consequences of Grinkevičiūtė's decision to approach Marcinkevičius to assist with the publication of her work becomes apparent in the context of the social history of postwar Lithuania. The tragic symmetry of their two life stories dramatically illustrates the deep social divide between the deportees and mainstream Soviet Lithuanian society. The two were born less than three years apart and belonged to the same generation, but their social origins were starkly different. She was born in Kaunas, the provisional capital city, into the *intelligentsia* family of a high government official. She went to one of the best schools in the country, the Aušra girl's gymnasium, where her father taught mathematics and physics. The household was cultured, and Dalia was constantly exposed to music, books and the theatre. Marcinkevičius, on the other hand, was born to a poor farmer in a small village, and the Bible was practically the only book to which he was exposed in his early childhood.

The arrival of Soviet power would change their fate irrevocably. Grinkevičiūtė lost everything, and was sent as a child to probable death. Marcinkevičius witnessed the trauma of war and the brutal guerrilla struggle in the countryside. But with the help of good grades in school and Soviet educational policies that promoted the entry of workers and poor farmers to institutions of higher education, he was able to enter Vilnius University and study literature. In 1949, the year when Grinkevičiūtė escaped from the Gulag and was hiding in Kaunas, forced secretly to dig the earth with her own hands to bury her mother in the basement of their former family home, Marcinkevičius and his cohort were living a reality beyond his most daring dreams.

Algimantas Baltakis, a classmate of Marcinkevičius at Vilnius University, describes their feelings at the time as follows: 'We were young, we were happy that the war was over, that we could go to university. We bought hats, we rubbed our cloth shoes with chalk until they were shining white, and walked up and down the streets singing Lithuanian folk songs. Some Poles passed by us on the street and I heard them whisper: '*Litwinų spivajon*, the Lithuanians are singing.'<sup>27</sup>

Marcinkevičius also recalls the joyful mood in 1949, at the very peak of Stalinism, the same singing on the streets, though he notes

<sup>27</sup> Interview with the author, conducted in September, 2010.

that it was a feeling of exhilaration mixed with terror, a kind of historical sublime that swept them along:

When I think about it, I cannot understand or explain why we were singing so much. But we were... Perhaps it had to do with sense of relief that we had escaped from the village, and that we were in Vilnius. That Vilnius was ours, and that it was Lithuanian... We gave to Stalin what was Stalin's and took for ourselves what was ours. People would disappear. I was in a choir, and one day two boys simply didn't show up. Nobody asked any questions, where they were, whether they were sick...<sup>18</sup>

When Stalin died in 1953, Marcinkevičius and his cohort were graduating from university and taking up jobs. They came to be called the Generation of 1930 and were seen as a lucky cohort of charmed youth. Having largely escaped the violence of war, they came of age just as the postwar reconstruction created opportunities for upward social mobility. They quickly assumed leading positions as members of the new Soviet Lithuanian cultural elite, and came to be revered as popular and respected writers, leaders of the controlled cultural renaissance made possible by the Soviet state's extremely generous, though politically instrumental, patronage of the arts.

Meanwhile, Grinkevičiūtė was released from prison after Stalin's death but still forbidden to travel west of the Ural Mountains. In 1954 she started her medical education in Omsk, and after Khrushchev's amnesty of 1956 was finally allowed to return to Lithuania. She obtained a medical degree from Kaunas University in 1960 and took up a job in the hospital of the small provincial townlet of Laukuva. Grinkevičiūtė was bitter but not broken by the experience of exile and was outspoken in her criticism of the regime. She became an active participant in the Soviet dissident movement, which meant that she was subject to regular police surveillance and harassment by the authorities for the rest of her life, which ended shortly after she entrusted her testimony into his hands. The tragic symmetry between the life stories of Grinkevičiūtė and Marcinkevičius – two lives in which everything was opposite except for the common experience of displacement – provides a dramatic illustration of the deep divide in Soviet Lithuanian society between the few who suffered direct repression and the many who one way or another accommodated themselves to Soviet rule.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the author, conducted in January, 2010.

## Displacement and the Two Nations of Soviet Lithuania

Peter Gatrell has done much to disclose the critical role of displacement in the shaping of individual and collective identities in Eastern Europe.<sup>29</sup> Jan Gross was another to argue that the mass killing and displacement that took place during WWII under the successive Nazi and Soviet regimes had a cumulative effect on the societies of East Central Europe.<sup>30</sup> With specific reference to the Baltic States, Gatrell argued that the pronounced local preoccupations with deportations should be expanded to include other forms of displacement to produce a more comprehensive narrative of the contemporary history of the region.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, the need to historicize the commonplace distinction between 'free' and 'forced' migration seems particularly apt in the case of the Soviet Union, where one or another form of compulsory displacement was common even after the end of the mass deportations. While approximately one in twenty Lithuanians were deported, the vast majority were displaced in other ways.

To begin with, since about 85 per cent of the population in 1945 lived in the countryside, collectivization clearly affected the bulk of the population through displacement, either by relocating them to the *kolkhoz* or forcing them to migrate to the cities. In subsequent years, the consolidation of rural population into larger settlements (a process known as melioration), military service and other forms of assigned employment, mobilization campaigns to drive the rural population into the cities, or to work for extended periods in the far northern and eastern reaches of the Soviet Union, were all life-changing events that served to define the Soviet experience for the majority of Lithuanians.

In Soviet Lithuania, urbanization after WWII proceeded at a rate unmatched anywhere in the USSR aside from Moldova and Belarus. In quantitative terms, the exodus of Lithuanians from the country to the city far exceeds any estimate of the numbers of those deported to the Gulag or

<sup>29</sup> Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds), *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (Basingstoke, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Jan Gross, 'Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe', *East European Politics and Societies*, 3, 2 (Spring 1989), pp. 198-214.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Gatrell, 'Population displacement in the Baltic region in the twentieth century: from 'refugee studies' to 'refugee history'', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 38, 1 (2007), pp. 43-60.

exiled to the West. By one count, over 700,000 Lithuanians picked up and left their homesteads and small villages between 1951 and 1976 to resettle in towns and cities.<sup>32</sup> The overall level of urbanization in Lithuania grew from an all-time low of 15 per cent in 1945 (down from the 23 per cent before the outbreak of hostilities) to reach 50 per cent in 1970 and a peak of 68.1 per cent in 1989. From 1949 to 1965, urbanization affected the lives of some 105 to 115 thousand individuals per year. The net migration to Lithuania from other parts of the USSR between 1959 and 1979 was only 115,200 persons, or 16.8 per cent of the overall population increase.<sup>33</sup>

This speed of urbanization in Lithuania knows no parallel in Western Europe. Soviet urbanization processes were on the whole more rapid than in the West, reflecting the brutality of forced modernization, particularly under Stalin. Russia, for example, went from 13 per cent urbanization just before WWI to about 70 per cent in 1989. In Lithuania, the same transformation occurred in just half the time. The process caused an enormous, traumatic level of social dislocation, but for many thousands of young Lithuanians, the opportunity to move to the city was also an unprecedented opportunity for upward social mobility.

The question of accommodation is a highly contested issue among experts and for a long time was virtually a taboo for the broader public. Indeed, the universality of the armed resistance has been reinforced as a key element of Lithuanian national identity since the popular movement. In 1999, the Lithuanian parliament recognized a document issued by the leaders of the resistance movement in 1949, the *Declaration of the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania*, as a legal act of the State of Lithuania, proof of its continuity on the grounds that a universal, organized, and armed resistance was active in Lithuania from 1944–1953.<sup>34</sup>

However, 1949 probably marked the turning point after which Soviet power in Lithuania was consolidated. Collectivization, which stood at just 4% at the beginning of 1949, went up to 60% by the end of the year. After 1949, the armed resistance was hardly universal and organized, but increasingly desperate, disintegrating and doomed. As the Soviets consolidated power, the partisans resorted increasingly to violent retribution

<sup>32</sup> V. Rupas and L. Vaitekūnas, *Lietuvos kaimo gyventojai ir gyvenvietės* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1980), p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> Augustine Izdelis, 'Industrialization and Population Change in the Baltics', *Lithuanian*, 30. 2 (Summer 1984).

<sup>34</sup> Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, *Law on the February 16, 1949 Declaration by the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania*, Law Nr. VIII-1021 (Vilnius, 12 January 1999).

and even terror against the rural population.<sup>35</sup> As more and more Lithuanians came to accept the inevitability of Soviet rule, the violent reprisals of the guerrillas were less and less seen as acts of legitimate resistance.

As argued by Aleksandras Shtromas, a noted Lithuanian émigré political scientist, the post-war resistance should be viewed not simply as a liberation movement, but as a civil war, and not only because some Lithuanians took the Soviet side for ideological reasons, but because it involved the clash of 'two forms of Lithuanian political consciousness,' i.e., those who decided to resist at all costs, and those who sought to preserve what they could in the face of an unavoidable fate.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, by 1949, most Lithuanians had come to accept Soviet power as a given, and they sought above all just to get on with their lives.

Shtromas notes that even during the Stalinist period, the regime was able to co-opt what he calls 'a certain segment of Lithuanian society':

There was, however, a certain segment of Lithuanian society, especially among the youth, who went over to the Soviets with completely sincere motives. Some of them, especially among the lower classes (mostly, but not exclusively young people), were offered by the Soviet regime opportunities for higher education, active participation in the life of society, and a more significant role in society – in other words, they were given a chance for upward mobility that they had not even dreamed of in the traditional Lithuanian social structure.<sup>37</sup>

Shtromas is highly critical of this layer of society, which he describes as completely compromised by its dependence on the regime. 'By recruiting a fraction of the lowest classes in the population to form the new establishment – a 'praetorian guard' fully devoted to the regime and easily manipulated by it'.<sup>38</sup>

However, the process of accommodation cannot be reduced to the calculation and manipulation of interests. The notion of interest need not be jettisoned, but it must be recognized that accommodation to Soviet rule was driven by the widespread transformation of individual and social identities during a historical period of unprecedented displacement and change.

The recollections of those who lived through these times frequently invoke the terror and thrill of the sublime transformation of the

<sup>35</sup> Mindaugas Pocius, *Kita menulio pusė: Lietuvos partizanų kovą su kolaboravimu 1944–1953 metais* (Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Vilnius, 2009), p. 195. Stanley Vardys, 'The Partisan Movement in Post-war Lithuania', *Lituanus*, 15, 1 (Spring 1969).

<sup>36</sup> Aleksandras Shtromas, 'Official Soviet Ideology and the Lithuanian People', *Mind Against the Wall*, p. 64.

<sup>37</sup> Aleksandras Shtromas, 'Official Soviet Ideology and The Lithuanian People', p. 61.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.



self in the fact of overwhelming historical forces. Marcelijus Martinaitis, a popular poet and writer who was just a few years younger than Marcinkevičius and who was associated with the 'non-conformist' group of intellectuals, describes the ambiguous and tortuous process by which he gradually became accommodated to Soviet life, admitting that he was indeed the product of the system in spite of his consistent efforts to remain separate from it:

I could even put it like this: that horrible, repressive regime took me where I would not have gone myself... Sometimes, jokingly or after a drink, we would repeat 'the prayer': 'I thank Soviet power for providing me, a son (daughter) of a peasant with little land, with food and clothes, for opening paths to education and a bright future.'<sup>39</sup>

Despite the irony of the 'prayer,' the fact is that Martinaitis, Marcinkevičius, and the bulk of the intellectual class formed during the afterwar period really were drawn from the sons and daughters of peasants with little land. They were created as a class by the system and its incentives, by the displacement from the country to the city, and their integration into a new way of life.

Meanwhile, just as the deportees were created and defined as persecuted group by being subjected to forced displacement, their subsequent identity and place in society was shaped by their experience of return. During the five year period after Stalin's death, about four million prisoners were released from the Gulag, shrinking the imprisoned population throughout the USSR by five times. The problem of social reintegration for so large of a population was felt throughout the USSR, as local communities generally treated the Gulag returnees as criminals and pariahs, devising a multitude of measures to ensure their continued marginalization, in spite of directives from Moscow stating that they were to be given housing and employment within two weeks of their return.

Former deportees started to return to Lithuania in 1956, with the initial release of about 17 000 people. These numbers would grow starting in 1958 to reach 80 000 by 1970.<sup>40</sup> The communist Lithuanian leadership and the local security services were strongly against Khrushchev's decision to amnesty and to allow the return. The First Secretary of the LCP Antanas Sniečkus was livid at what he described as the careless experimentation of Khrushchev. A declassified report of the local KGB made

<sup>39</sup> Marcelijus Martinaitis, *Mes gyvenome: biografiniai užrašai* (Vilnius, Rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2009), p. 30–31.

<sup>40</sup> Kristina Burinskaitė, 'KGB prieš buvusius politinius kalinius ir tremtinius,' *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, 2, 24 (2008), pp. 121–126.

it clear that the deportees were 'erroneously and prematurely released from incarceration'. The security services believed they 'had not renounced their hostile views of Soviet power' and 'exerted negative influence on unstable segments of the population,' and who would resume 'their efforts to form an anti-Soviet nationalist underground'.<sup>41</sup>

As a result, the returnees were subject to continuing surveillance, they were allowed to travel abroad only in exceptional cases, and their movements within the LSSR were often watched. If there was any suspicion of involvement in subversive activities, the deportee was often subjected to public denunciation and compromise in the local press, reinforcing their exclusion from society.<sup>42</sup>

It should be emphasized that the exclusion faced by returnees was very much a Lithuanian affair; not only or even primarily imposed from above.<sup>43</sup> This reflected the radically altered values and historical perspective of Lithuanian society subject to decades of Soviet-style reconstruction and development. When the deportees began to come back after the death of Stalin, the communities to which they returned were not the same as before. Already in 1946, Algimantas Indriūnas, who returned illegally to Lithuania even before the death of Stalin, wrote: 'Having returned to Lithuania I felt that here life moved a couple decades ahead but I not only did not stay in the same spot but moved some decade back'.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, both groups had undergone a profound transformation, and there were now clearly two nations of Soviet Lithuania, both shaped by displacement.

Those who returned in the fifties or later felt the schism in even stronger terms. The deportees were met with broad suspicion and were generally looked upon by the regional authorities, labour unions and most members of society as a source of unnecessary trouble. People were afraid that they would lay claims to their former property, and that they would disrupt their lives and the new stability that had recently been

<sup>41</sup> Cited in Amit Weinert, 'The Empires Pay a Visit: Gulag Returnees, East European Rebellions, and Soviet Frontier Politics', *The Journal of Modern History*, 78. 2 (2006), p. 333.

<sup>42</sup> In Grinkevičiūtė's case the authorities published an article harshly criticizing her character and work as a doctor in the regional newspaper *Artojas*. Marija Vitkevičienė, 'Dėmės baltame chalate' (Stains on a White Robe), *Artojas* (Šilalė regional newspaper), Nr. 67 (11 June 1974), p. 3–4.

<sup>43</sup> The one does not exclude the other. The social vulnerability of the deportees increased their vulnerability to manipulation and coercion by the security services. In exchange for an offer to erase the stigma of deportation from their official documents, a number of deportees, and even the children of deportees who had never been imprisoned agreed to serve as KGB informants.

<sup>44</sup> Algimantas Indriūnas, *Nelegalios karjeros metai* (Vilnius, 2005), p. 133.

established. Some deportees who did not have relatives to support them and who could not find employment were left in a dire condition. For example, Kazys Saja tells about his personal encounter with a woman deportee who was terminally ill and left to fend for herself. Aside from offering her some money for immediate sustenance, he said there was nothing that he could do to help her.<sup>45</sup> There was also widespread suspicion of the criminal ways that the deportees had allegedly adopted during their incarceration; they were seen as no better than the criminals whose company they had kept.

The stigma of criminality extended to the deportees, and even to their children. Joana Jakštaitė-Kurmelavičienė, who was deported with her family and returned in 1958, recalls how many parents would complain at meetings that the school 'took in all sorts of bandits, and now they will harm our children'. Algirdas Janulevičius describes how the *propiska* system of registering one's place of registration was abused to keep returnees marginalized: 'I could not register for half a year. I did not register because I was not employed. Nobody wanted to employ a deportee because he is not registered. (...) We were lepers although we were not told so directly'.<sup>46</sup> Some were forced to move or were recruited to work outside of the LSSR, like the family of Birute Mickevičiūtė-Bičkauskienė, deported in 1947 as a teenager. After an unsuccessful attempt to integrate in Lithuania after her return in 1952, she had to settle with her family in Kaliningrad.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, a report of a commission sent by the USSR Council of Ministers to investigate the integration of returnees took note of the extent to which Lithuanian municipalities created artificial administrative barriers to the reintegration of Gulag returnees. Similar measures were noted in Gorky, Baku and Yerevan, but the Lithuanian municipalities were singled out for the range of measures they deployed. Duplicating the function of the existing police passport bureau, special municipal commissions were created to review requests for registration; the minimum 'sanitary norm', or minimal living space per person, was arbitrarily raised, and returnees were issued only temporary registration instead of permanent cards that were necessary to secure employment, etc.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Kazys Saja, November 2012.

<sup>46</sup> *Atmintis: tremtinių atsiminimų rinkinys* (Kaišiadorių muziejus, 2003), pp. 105, 81.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>48</sup> Report dated 25 March 1958. GARF R-8131/32/5600/11, cited in Marc Elie, *Les Anciens Détenus Du Goulag: Libérations Massives, Réinsertion Et Réhabilitation Dans L'URSS Poststalinienne, 1953-1964*. Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, 2007), p. 269.

Paradoxically, the incredible receptivity of Lithuanians to the testimony of deportees during the popular movement seems to have erased the memory of popular indifference and even hostility that was shown to them throughout the Soviet period. Šulskytė emphasizes that Grinkevičiūtė's travails did not end with her return from exile. Indeed, she was persecuted in her homeland for her determination to testify openly of her experience and speak out against the regime. She lost her job, was accused of forging her credentials, loitering, and was slandered in newspaper articles. Šulskytė describes the collective outpouring of sympathy for Grinkevičiūtė after her death with irony: 'Now all of Lithuania is writing and talking about poor Dalytė. Finally people understand. When America and Europe wept eleven years ago [over the publication of her late testimony abroad], Dalia herself was being kicked around and tortured in her native land.... Now, Lithuania is shocked'.<sup>49</sup>

### The Authority of the Author

In the Soviet context, Foucault's insight that discourse is power and power is discourse seemed too obvious to be of any analytical value.<sup>50</sup> In the ideal form of totalitarianism, knowledge, discourse and power are held to be virtually identical. Only that which was permitted was written, and everything that was written carried the authority of truth. And with the advent of the popular movement, the disintegration of totalitarianism implied a revolutionary hiatus where power and discourse were somehow separate, a time when speech was free not only from the blatant censorship of the authorities, but from the pervasive power that inheres in and shapes human interaction.

But like the 'return of memory,' the 'power of the powerless' is a myth that reflected the revolutionary, utopian mindset of the late eighties. In reality, power never left the stage. With the collapse of the regime's legitimacy, real power came to be accumulated in the establishment *intelligentsia* of Soviet Lithuania – especially the leading members of the Writers Union, whose status as the voice of the oppressed nation had been developing gradually since the mid-sixties. At that time, when Khrushchev pushed forward with the meliorisation of the countryside throughout the Baltics, the discourse of traumatic lament over the separation from the

<sup>49</sup> '...Rašo ir kalba dabar apie vargšę Dalytę visa Lietuva. Pagaliau susigaudė. Kai prieš vienuolika metų praverko Amerika ir Europa – ją pačią spardė kojomis ir kankino visokiausiais būdais gimtojoje žemėje... Dabar Lietuva sukrėsta' (Šulskytė, p. 140).

<sup>50</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison* (London, Penguin, 1991).

land was rapidly gaining ground. By the early 1980s, well before the onset of *glasnost*, this discourse of physical and cultural displacement, expressed most strongly in literature, had sensitized Lithuanians to the trauma of deracination as a basic condition of Soviet modernity, priming them for a ready identification with fate of the deportees.

Marcinkevičius was by far the most prominent of writers who gave expression to this cultural mode. Poems like *Blood and Ashes*, the triptych called *1946*, which portrays the trauma of the youth who witnessed the postwar upheavals without becoming their direct victim, as well as other more nationally-minded literary works, were more than just popular and memorized by schoolchildren, but enjoyed a truly cult status. These works influenced other artists (like Geda, Aputis, Martinaitis, Kutavičius, Granauskas and others) who worked with the same motifs in literature, music and the visual arts.

In 1986, Romualdas Granauskas wrote *The Homestead Under the Maple Tree*, perhaps the culminating work of the discourse of traumatic uprooting. Serialized in *Pergalė* two years before the publication of Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs, it evoked the same existential concern with questions of ethics and repentance, collective identity and ecology that was erupting throughout Soviet literature at the time, such as Chingiz Aitmatov's *Plakha* (*The Executioner's Bloc*) published in *Novy Mir* that same year. It also echoes the classics of Russian village prose like Rasputin's *Farewell to Matyora* or Solzhenitsyn's *Matryona's House* by portraying an old woman, the last resident of an abandoned village, as the sole survivor of a vanished world, with a deep sense of attachment to the land, an idealized ethical commitment to communal relations, and centuries-old traditions in the context of social destruction and degradation.

But as distinct from the literature of the sixties and seventies, Granauskas crossed the line towards open social and political critique, focussed on the tragedy of collectivization, of urbanization, and what was called the 'melioration' or consolidation of agricultural settlements in the late 1970s, which dealt the final blow to the last remaining traditional villages.

We have seen many wars and upheavals, fires, floods and plagues. Our lives and destinies are in flux, but one thing never changes. Come what may, your patch of land will not burn. It cannot be arrested or deported, or blown to pieces. Come what may, you can rest yourself upon it, it may be small and infertile, but still you wrap your arms around your children, pressing their small heads to your chest, and calmly watch how the world is thundering and trembling all around you.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Romualdas Granauskas, *Gyvenimas po klevu* (Life Under the Maple Tree) (Vilnius, 1989).

Granauskas wrote the book over the course of a month, almost in a single draft. Somewhat raw as a literary text, it was highly effective in capturing and transmitting the cultural mood of the time. The apocalyptic sensibility of this work, together with an autochthonous sense of national identity based on a post-traumatic attachment to and identification with the land, became a core element of Lithuanian cultural and political discourse in the late 1980s. Arvydas Juozaitis, one of the founding members of the popular movement, told Granauskas that he wrote the speech for the founding session of *Sąjūdis* 'in a single breath,' the moment he had finished reading the *Homestead Under the Maple Tree*.<sup>52</sup>

As Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* enabled a more open and public discussion of previously forbidden topics, the public role of writers was growing in strength and expanded in scope, encompassing non-literary areas such as environmentalism, social issues and politics through essays, opinion pieces, and public speaking engagements.

Marcinkevičius, Martinaitis, Sigitas Geda and many other leading members of the official *intelligentsia* were active leaders of the popular movement, making key speeches at mass rallies and mobilizing the populace. In late Soviet Lithuanian society, ruled by secretive bureaucrats, the cultural *intelligentsia* served as a surrogate for public politicians. They alone enjoyed the public visibility and trust that could mobilize the population towards any political goal.

Moreover, the establishment writers were a cohesive group with significant organizational resources. In 1986, the Writers Union had 216 members, of whom 45 per cent (97) were members of the Communist Party of Lithuania.<sup>53</sup> The communist party organization of the Writers Union used its authority to hold open meetings which were the vanguard of *glasnost* in the republic, radically expanding the envelope of acceptable political discussions.

In the political discourse of the time, a threshold was passed on 4 April 1988 at one of the meetings organized in the Palace of Artists (one of the most prestigious buildings in Vilnius, which now serves as the Presidential Palace). The delegates passed a number of resolutions on strengthening the role of Lithuanian and limiting that of Russian in

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Granauskas, July 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Liudas Truska, 'Origins of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*' in 13 January 1991 in Lithuania in the Context of the Recent Research (Vilnius, Vilnius Pedagogical University Press, 2006), p. 171.

public life and education that would have been unthinkable just a year or two before.<sup>54</sup>

On 5 May 1988, Alfonsas Maldonis, a classmate of Marcinkevičius and Baltakis at Vilnius University in 1949, addressed the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party in his capacity of Writers Union board chairman. Copies of his speech which criticized the falsification of history and Moscow's control over cultural issues in Lithuania were widely circulated in manuscript form, copied by hand and passed around. The popular movement was initiated and driven by many members of the creative and technical *intelligentsia*, but the leading role of the writers was recognized.

For example, the geographer Česlovas Kudaba (1934–1993), a leading member of *Sąjūdis* whose own writings on ecology and nature were extremely influential at the time and who would be one of the signatories of the act of independence, asserted that the writers proved to be 'the most courageous and ahead of the rest. We all trusted them'.<sup>55</sup>

That said, not all agreed with this sentiment. In 1986, Algirdas Patackas, a geologist working for the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, was imprisoned for editing a *samizdat* journal. He lost his job and upon his release in 1987 he had to work as a labourer, though he soon entered politics as part of *Sąjūdis* and would later become a signatory of the act of independence. For people like Patackas, who risked his career to engage in active opposition to the Soviet regime, the Soviet Lithuanian writers were seen as conformists: 'Marcinkevičius was never our man. Nobody in my circle either admired or respected him'.<sup>56</sup>

Vytautas Ališauskas, a Catholic philosopher who also became active in the politics of *Sąjūdis*, was even more outspoken in his criticism: 'All those lines about goodness, spirituality and nature made my stomach turn,' he recalls, referring to the sublime pastoralism of Marcinkevičius' late poetry. 'The regime was doing what it needed to do, and all that was fully incorporated in it. To use the Soviet expression, it was opium for the masses'.<sup>57</sup>

For people like Ališauskas or Patackas the true face of moral resistance and authority was not the writer who gave expression to the sorrows of the nation in the Soviet press, but the fighter and martyr

<sup>54</sup> Vytautas Bubnys (b. 1932) read out a report entitled 'Who Can Revive National Dignity'. The meeting passed resolutions calling for giving Lithuanian the status of an official language.

<sup>55</sup> 'Pokalbis apie Sąjūdį' (Conversation about Sąjūdis), *Akiračiai*, 10 (1988).

<sup>56</sup> *Naujasis Židinys-Aida*, 4 (2003), p. 160.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

who continued to fight. This flank looked for role-models beyond the establishment circle, such as in the tragic but talkative figure of Justinas Mikutis (1922–1988), a vagrant, eccentric former deportee who frequented informal soirees in Vilnius, giving impromptu lectures about philosophy, Christianity and art – and who was highly critical of Marcinkevičius.<sup>58</sup>

However, by entrusting her testimony to Marcinkevičius, Grinkevičiūtė bridged the social divide that separated them and took a step towards the mending of the division between the 'two nations' of Soviet Lithuania. Subsequently, Marcinkevičius and other leading members of the Writers Union took it upon themselves to bridge this social gap in discourse. They assumed the role of editors, presenting her memoirs and those of other deportees, representing the process of reception that would be followed by their readers.

Thus, when the deportee memoirs began to be published in 1988, their narratives were read against the background of the pre-existing discourse of traumatic displacement, which had already drawn an explicit equivalence between the minority experience of deportation with the other forms of displacement that were experienced by the many. The very idea of deportation was subject to metaphorical expansion synchronically and diachronically to include all living Lithuanians and Lithuanians throughout history, and not only to individual Lithuanians but to all aspects of Lithuanian identity. Even Lithuanians who emigrated to the West were identified as deportees. For example, in the opening article for the literary 'Deportee Archive' in *Pergalė*, Liudvikas Gadeikis encouraged members of the émigré community to contribute their testimonies.<sup>59</sup>

Viktorija Daujotytė, one of Lithuania's leading critics, extends the memory of deportation beyond the beginnings of recorded history. Referring to the work of the historian Antanas Tyla, she says that deportation was 'the method of our extermination, perhaps, for the past seven and a half thousand years'.<sup>60</sup> Approaching the more recent past, she notes that Lithuanians were driven from their homeland during the Crusades, and deported again during the partitions of Poland. Deportation

<sup>58</sup> Vaidotas Žukas, 'Justinas Mikutis – laisvas žmogus nelaisvoje aplinkoje', *15min.lt*, (25 April, 2011) <http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/kultura/asmenybe/justinas-mikutis-laisvas-zmogus-nelaisvoje-aplinkoje-285-213674>. Accessed October 1, 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Liudvikas Gadeikis, 'Tremties archyvas' (Archive of Deportation) in *Pergalė*, 1 (1989), p. 185.

<sup>60</sup> Viktorija Daujotytė, 'Paskutinis laisvės prieglobstis' (The last Shelter of Freedom) in *Pergalė*, 12 (1989), pp. 178–183.



was systematized as a means to defeat the rebellions of 1794, 1830 and especially, 1863, peaking in the unprecedented Soviet deportations 1940–1941 and 1945–1953, with the twenty year period of independence between the wars, and the two hundred years following the Battle of Grunewald as the only moment of reprieve.

And in the trope that was by this time almost a cliché of the discourse of *Sąjūdis*, Lithuanian culture and identity are seen in the light of deportation: 'Together with people, many words which were dear to Lithuanians were deported: God, God's mother, Homeland Lithuania, Cross, Crucifix, prayer, Easter, Christmas, holy hymns were deported.'<sup>61</sup> Following Marcinkevičius' reading of Grinkevičiūtė, Daujotytė constructs the moment of return as offering the possibility of redemption: 'The poems of the deportees are approaching us as the ice mountain of pain from the Laptev sea which has not fully emerged yet. Deportee poems are emerging from oblivion and desecration like white bones from the land of eternal frost.'<sup>62</sup>

Marcinkevičius would continue the process of abstracting the experience of deportation into the more general concept of displacement in the political speeches he made as a leading member of *Sąjūdis*. For example, at a session of the Supreme Council of the LSSR, he made a call to declare Lithuanian the state language and to restore other key symbols of Lithuanian statehood. Characteristically, the title of the speech references the moment of return from deportation, and the text of his address extends the experience of deportation to aspects of Lithuanian culture and identity: 'Our language has experienced much abuse, discrimination and injustice, now it is like returning from deportation and is returning to itself what was taken away from her, what belongs to her by the natural and constitutional law.'<sup>63</sup>

The immersion of Lithuanians in the cultural discourse of displacement was reinforced and channelled into rituals of personal transformation through mass rallies and ceremonies of commemoration. Starting in 1986, Lithuanians took advantage of the lifting of restrictions to visit to the distant sites of the Gulag system. Thousands of families organized expeditions to visit the camps where their relatives once lived, and in many cases to recollect the remains of the deceased, for reburial in Lithuanian soil.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>63</sup> Justinas Marcinkevičius, 'Tartum grįžtumėm iš tremties' (As though we had just returned from deportation). Speech delivered at a session of the Supreme Council of the LSSR on 18 November 1988. See, *Pažadėtoji žemė (The Promised Land)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2009), pp. 40–45.

The reburial ceremonies were often made into elaborate, mass rituals in city centres, with tens of thousands of people in attendance, and broadcast on television to the entire nation.

Films like *Lithuania Between Past and Future* and *The Return* (Petras Abukevičius, 1990) document the commemorative rituals of Gulag deportees and their descendants during the twilight of the USSR.<sup>64</sup> The cinematic representation of pilgrimages to Siberia to recover the remains of ancestors for reburial in the homeland of Lithuania explores the denaturing effects of displacement on identity even while it reinforces ties of kinship and an ethos of autochthony. *Lithuania between Past and Future* puts some of the central political rituals of the era on the screen, like the consecration of the remains of deportees brought back from Siberia to Lithuania.

Scenes of people digging up graves in Siberia and the return of coffins draped in Lithuanian flags and met at the airport in Vilnius by huge crowds are framed by an extended discussion by the ethnographer Norbertas Vėlius on the mythology and culture of the ancient Lithuanians.<sup>65</sup> Vėlius notes that 'our ancestors' have lived on the same territory for over four thousand years. The scene of reburial is juxtaposed with the image of Vėlius pointing to a fresco on Baltic mythology, explaining how the symbol of the world as a tree symbolizes the autochthonous connection of the Lithuanian nation to the earth. Shifting back to images of the crowds of people watching a procession of coffins for re-consecration in the main Cathedral of Vilnius where the nation's ancient rulers were buried, Vėlius comments that: 'Lithuanians are inseparable from their land. Even after death they return to their homeland... And they could never understand a person who voluntarily chooses to live outside of their home country.' These rituals of return were thus made to build upon the most ancient and deeply rooted Baltic myths and beliefs.

They instilled a deep sense of identification among Lithuanians at large with the trauma of deportation. In spite of the potential for a clash between the 'two nations' of Soviet Lithuania, the cohesion of the

<sup>64</sup> During the time of popular movement, filming and chronicling was virtually an obsession. Amateurs as well as documentary film gurus like Robertas Verba took thousands of metres of footage of various commemoratives public rituals and events. Paradoxically, these materials today are rather poorly documented and organized. For example, the national library of Martynas Mažvydas does not contain a comprehensive and systematized collection of these materials that would allow the researcher to thoroughly familiarize himself/herself with them. Conversation with staff of the Mažvydas Library, January 2012.

<sup>65</sup> Vėlius was a university professor and one of the key figures of the ethnocultural movement that promoted the preservation and revival of folk culture that started in the mid-sixties and rapidly spread across Lithuania.

popular movement was maintained through the progressive identification of all Lithuanians with the trauma of displacement. This association built on the discourse of displacement that was such a significant part of Soviet Lithuanian culture for two decades before *glasnost*.<sup>46</sup> At the peak of the popular movement, parallels between collectivization and the migration to the city and the deportations of the Stalinist years were no longer simply implied. The trauma of collectivization, urbanization, Russification and other forms of physical and cultural displacement were identified as one with the trauma of deportation.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusions

*Sąjūdis* capitalized on the publication of deportee memoirs by cultivating a collective sense of Lithuanian selfhood based on a sacred and inseparable relationship between the people and their territory. The individual works of Gulag survivors were essential, but not sufficient to articulate the experience of trauma in a manner that could be appropriated by the majority of Lithuanians who had more or less accommodated themselves to the Soviet regime.

The return of memory based on historical trauma and the charting of a new future for the nation involved a repudiation of the past. But this repudiation raised a host of difficult questions: who was to blame for what happened? Beyond the police and security forces responsible for political repressions, should the list include government officials, party members, members of Komsomol, the establishment *intelligentsia*? And who precisely were the victims of the regime? Was it only those who were deported, imprisoned, or killed? Those mobilized into the army, those forced to work in a specific location, those prevented from working in their chosen profession?

The collectivization of deportee memory played a critical role in resolving such intractable problems by raising the question to a higher

<sup>46</sup> In a public speech at the *Seimas* in 2008 on the 60th anniversary of the Great Deportation, Algis Čaplikas stated: 'One can say that all of Lithuania was deported. Not only those thousands of unfortunate ones who were deported to the unknown during all the waves of deportations but also all those who remained in their country. Why do I claim that? Because the relatives of those deported drowning in grief and fear that they can experience the same fate were in spiritual deportation. Those who denounced, reported, helped to organize deportations deported themselves with their own hands because they suffered not only the reproaches of consciousness and control of the regime they served but also the crushing condemnation of society... And those remaining who by force were brought to the kolkhoz, which resembled concentration camps? Why should those Lithuanians who so sincerely loved their land be forced to become completely indifferent to it? The knowledge killing the respect towards work and land, the knowledge that you do not have anything of your own – that is the fate of deportee serf'.

level of abstraction, allowing for almost all Lithuanians to free themselves from any association with the regime. The social transformation and sense of solidarity that brought hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets was cemented by the myth of universal deportation and inculcated by rituals of return that were filmed and broadcast to the entire population, accompanied by a highly emotive discourse of trauma and appeals to an indigenous sense of national identity.

The euphoria that accompanied the Soviet collapse was short lived. The consolidation of the nation unravelled quickly upon the achievement of independence, as internal social divisions resurfaced in the pluralist atmosphere of democratic politics. Debates over collaboration and accommodation gained ground, and the myth of universal deportation and return began to unravel, although slowly. The sense of national history as a history of suffering is deeply entrenched, but it is ill-adapted to the demands of building a democratic polity in an independent state. It obstructs social reflection on the experience of other groups, namely Poles and Jews, and it leaves many blank spots in the memory of the Soviet period, notably where Lithuanians were not so much the victims, as the agents of history.

The affective reception of the deportation testimonies played a role in the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence. But at the same time it obscured the plurality of experience and any differentiation among the historical actors within the category of the nation. To this day, the notion of memory's 'return' implies a non-comparative, totalizing approach to history as the history of either heroism or victimhood. Perhaps because of this reason there is still relatively little academic, comparative and analytical studies into the body of deportee testimonies. With the unravelling of the myth of universal deportation, this rich literature continues to beckon intensive study.

Dovilė Budrytė

## War, Deportation and Trauma in the Narratives of Former Women Resistance Fighters

A growing number of works focusing on collective trauma acknowledges the crucial role of gender in remembering, expressing and memorializing events. In the literature focusing on the Holocaust, there is a clear understanding that traumatic history would be incomplete without the addition of women as victims, perpetrators, resisters and bystanders. In the words of Yehuda Bauer, 'if all human experience has a gender-related agenda, as women's studies tells us, the Holocaust can be no exception. Indeed, it seems to me that the problems facing women as women and men as men have a special poignancy in an extreme situation such as the Holocaust.'<sup>1</sup>

By way of contrast, the literature focusing on the repression that took place under Stalin has only recently started paying attention to the role of gender and women's experiences. For example, in *Carrying Linda's Stones*, an anthology of the life stories of five Estonian women who were deported to Siberia, the editors give the following reasons for applying a gender perspective to study traumatic memories: 'We have chosen to focus on women because the majority of life stories written about World War II and its aftermath were published by men who often have a different perspective.... Women's and men's lives differed considerably during this period. Women's stories not only concentrate on themselves, but on broader family relations.'<sup>2</sup> Gender-sensitive perspectives have compelled researchers of Soviet-era repression to pay attention to women's bodies and women's issues,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg, 'Introduction: Experience and Expression: Women and the Holocaust', in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust*, edited by Elizabeth Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Lynda Malik and Suzanne Stiver Lie, 'Estonian Women's Life Stories Seen through Sociological and Gender Glasses: Theoretical Considerations', in *Carrying Linda's Stones: An Anthology of Estonian Women's Life Stories*, edited by Suzanne Stiver Lie, Lynda Malik, Ilvi Jõe-Cannon and Rutt Hinrikus, (Tallinn: Tallinn University Press, 2007), pp. 20–21.

such as infertility, single motherhood, and the death of children – issues that tend to be omitted from mainstream historical perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

Applying a gender perspective to the study of traumatic memories and focusing on stories told by women can also help to develop a more individual, moving and personal narrative, thus decentering traumatic history and moving away from imagining the nation as a fighting and suffering hero. For example, according to Violeta Davoliūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea), the famous memoir by Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, is a heroic narrative of individual resistance and as such, it departs from ‘the irredentist, ethnocentric historical consciousness’ usually associated with deportee memoirs in Lithuania.<sup>4</sup>

In Baltic studies gender perspectives have been applied, by and large, to interpret the memoirs of deportees. There is a shortage of accounts analyzing the lives, experiences and memoirs of women who were (and viewed themselves as) active participants in war, in spite of the historical relationship between the resistance and the deportations, and in spite of the widespread participation of women in the resistance. How do women who were resistance fighters remember their roles as related to violence as well as the traumatic experiences of torture and deportation? How are these memories related to national metanarratives about traumatic events? How do they cope with traumatic memories? Are those memories transformed into empowerment through political activities? With these questions in mind, in 2009–2011 I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews (allowing the free flow of narrative) with two former resistance fighters, Natalija Gudonytė and Vitalija Kraujelytė. Natalija also shared her written memoirs with me.

The lives of the two women share some contours. Both were active members of the anti-Soviet resistance movement and were deported to labor camps. They both experienced discrimination upon their return to Lithuania. On the other hand, there are significant differences as well. Natalija was born and raised in Vilnius; she had an upper class upbringing and later pursued a career as a university professor. Vitalija was born and raised in a peasant family in Kaniūkai village (close to Utena). Currently they are active in the political prisoners union and both act as ‘agents of memory’ – they are

<sup>3</sup> Rutt Hinrikus and Ene Kõresaar, ‘A Brief Overview of Life History Collection and research in Estonia’, in *She Who Remembers Survives: Interpreting Estonian Women’s Post-Soviet Life Stories*, edited by Tüna Kirss, Ene Kõresaar, Marju Lauristin (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2007), pp. 20–23.

<sup>4</sup> Violeta Davoliūtė, ‘Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė’ *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 36, Nr. 1 (2005), p. 52.

actively involved in trying to establish the truth about the past, honoring the victims (in the case of Vitalija, her brother Antanas; in the case of Natalija, her fellow deportees) and identifying the perpetrators.

## Women and the Resistance

Almost all Lithuanians recognize the name of Antanas Kraujelis-Siaubūnas, the last active resistance fighter who killed himself to avoid capture by the Soviets in 1965. But relatively few know the story of my second interlocutor, his sister Vitalija Kraujelytė. Although the active and widespread role of women in the anti-Soviet war of resistance has been thoroughly documented by scholars like Žaneta Smolskutė, it remains on the margins of public memory.

The anti-Soviet resistance was described as 'the great guerrilla war,'<sup>5</sup> and it peaked in 1944–49. The resistance fighters opposed the policies of sovietization and political repression pursued by the Soviet Union. People joined the resistance not only due to 'patriotic idealism,' but also to avoid the draft and simply because it became almost impossible to cope with the many insecurities and terrors of civilian life.<sup>6</sup> It is estimated that during 1944–53 there were at least 50,000 active anti-Soviet resistance fighters in Lithuania. Overall, approximately 100,000 people were involved in anti-Soviet resistance. This number includes the fighters and their helpers (messengers, supporters and reserve fighters). Approximately 20,000 partisans were killed during the war of resistance.<sup>7</sup>

In 1944–45 the resistance fighters tried to gain control of the territory of Lithuania; they openly engaged in battles with the Red Army. The bloodiest battles took place during this time. Given the unequal forces, and enormous losses, shortly after 1945 the resistance fighters changed their tactics. They split into smaller groups and avoided direct engagement with the enemy.<sup>8</sup> In 1949–53, the resistance movement lost its strength. The organizational structure of battle groups, present during the previous stages of resistance movement, disintegrated. The Soviets were able to infiltrate many units of resistance fighters and started to control their ability to communicate with each other.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Lane, 'Lithuania Stepping Westward', in *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* by David J. Smith, Artis Pabriks, Aldis Purs and Thomas Lane (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940–1990* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> 'Antisovietinis pasipriešinimas', <http://www.genocid.lt/centras/lt/1486/a/>, January 21, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Izidorius Ignatavičius, (ed.) *Lietuvos naikinimas ir tautos kovą (1940–1998)* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1999), p. 262.

Smolskutė gathered factual information about two hundred and fifty women who were active during the war of resistance and who received the status of *kario savanorio statusas*, 'volunteer fighter,' from the government. At first (in 1945), there were no strict restrictions on women joining the partisans. This situation changed in 1949 when, starting to experience a decline in strength, the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters Movement (the anti-Soviet resistance) stopped accepting women as active fighters.

Smolskutė concluded that during the Lithuanian war of resistance women partisans were, in many ways, 'treated the same way as men' by the Soviets.<sup>9</sup> The bodies of murdered women partisans were displayed in town squares and they were subjected to torture. There were not many women leaders of partisan groups; they performed mostly auxiliary roles as messengers and paramedics. When arrested, women partisans tried to play down their roles in the resistance movement; however, there is evidence suggesting that they were active and brave participants in military operations.<sup>10</sup>

Natalija Gudonytė and Vitalija Kraujelytė, my two interlocutors, were deeply involved throughout the conflict. Vitalija served as a partisan messenger in eastern Lithuania, close to Utena, from shortly after World War II until 1951, when she was deported to Inginsk in Chermkhov district, Irkutsk region. Her *nom de guerre* was Saulutė, 'Little Sun'. In 1960, Vitalija was deported to Maklakov village (now Lesosibirsk) in Yeniseyski district, Krasnoyarsk region. She and her family helped Jonas Kimštas-Žalgiris, the Commander in Chief of resistance fighters in Eastern Aukštaitija's Vytautas district.

Natalija served as a partisan messenger in central Lithuania (Suvalkija), from shortly after World War II until 1950, when she was arrested in Vilnius and tortured by the KGB. Her *nom de guerre* was Vosilka, 'Cornflower,' at first and later Laima. She helped Adolfas Valenta-Ožys until he was killed in 1947, and later Vytautas Matulevičius-Pempė, the Commander in Chief of resistance fighters in Tauras district, Vytautas division. In 1952, as a political prisoner, she was deported to Taishet lager, a top security camp close to Irkutsk.

<sup>9</sup> Žaneta Smolskutė, 'Motery dalyvavimo ginkluotame pasipriešinime 1944–1953 m. ypatumai', *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, Nr. 2 (20) (2006), p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



## Remembering Resistance, Engaging the National Meta-Narrative

Natalija starts her story about involvement in the resistance movement in 1946 with references to patriotism: 'Our resistance organization was large, vibrant; the sense of patriotism was deep'. Later she adds, 'See, our upbringing was entirely different [from that in post-Soviet Lithuania] – we were brought up in a patriotic spirit; we had love for homeland and God. This is what supported us'. In her published memoir, Natalija makes the link between patriotism and activism even more explicit: 'How could we be aloof and indifferent when our homeland was crying?!'<sup>11</sup>

The climax of Vitalija's account about her involvement in the resistance movement is a story involving a Lithuanian flag, which was banned during Soviet times. (Later during our conversation, Vitalija demonstrated her emotional attachment to the Lithuanian flag when she told me that she knew that Lithuania was truly independent when she saw a Lithuanian flag on Gediminas hill in Vilnius during the time of the national revival.) She described an Easter morning in 1948 when, together with her family, she saw a Lithuanian flag in the neighboring house, which belonged to a *stribelka* [either a female anti-resistance fighter or a woman married to a *stribas*, a male anti-resistance fighter]. At that time five resistance fighters were hiding in the cellars of her family's house, among them the leader of the Aukštaitija partisans Jonas Kimštas-Žalgiris. Having heard the story about the flag, he decided to get it. According to Vitalija, Kimštas-Žalgiris 'brought it [the flag] back [to her family's house] as the most important, the most treasured thing in the world and spread it out in the room with the table prepared for Easter'. It was an emotional moment, 'a solemn oath' for everyone – the partisans and Vitalija's family, as everyone kissed the flag with tears in their eyes. However, this was a bitter sweet memory. A week later, her family's house was surrounded by *stribai* who were looking for the partisans. That time, the *stribai* did not find the bunker; however, they started searching Vitalija's family's house regularly.

Vitalija's and Natalija's memories about resistance are influenced by the national (and nationalistic) meta-narrative about the war of resistance and deportations. This meta-narrative, or a memory regime, was created in the late 1980s, when the process of democratization started in Soviet

<sup>11</sup> 'Natalija Gudonytė', in Natalija Gudonytė (ed.), *Naikintos, bet nenugalėtos kartos kelias: Prisiminimai*, (Vilnius: Vyzdys, 2006), p. 55.

Lithuania, and when the memoirs of former resistance fighters and deportees became available to the public. It featured brave warriors (male resistance fighters) who fought against an external enemy – the occupying force, the USSR. Heroism, patriotism and stoicism despite betrayal by the West (they had hoped that the Western allies would help the resistance fighters) were the defining features of this resistance. Numerous resistance fighters and their families were deported to the land of 'eternal cold' (Siberia) where many of them perished. The nation was 'reborn' in the late eighties, when a movement known as *Atgimimas* (Rebirth), which had independence from the Soviet Union as its goal, started. According to this narrative, the deportations and political repression that took place under Stalin were an attempt to eradicate the Lithuanian nation and therefore should be remembered as genocide.<sup>12</sup> This narrative provided a 'schematic memory template' (James V. Wertsch's term) for both collective and individual rememberings.<sup>13</sup>

By and large, women fighters are absent from this 'schematic memory template'. In some stories, they briefly emerge as devoted helpers – messengers, performing auxiliary roles. At the same time, women (who are not fighters) are featured in the stories about deportations – as mothers and sisters, often bemoaning the loss of their men, thus contributing to an image of a suffering nation which is raped by foreign occupiers.

Such narratives demonstrate the features of what Nicola Henry describes as 'monumental myths [that] are often based on remarkably overt gendered narratives of heroism, masculinity and martyrdom'. According to Henry, the 'hypermasculinity of war and the perpetration of gross human rights violations are no new revelation; indeed, the history of warfare is the history of masculinity'.<sup>14</sup> She goes on to argue that women's experiences of warfare, particularly as victims of gendered crimes, are likely to fundamentally challenge state-centric heroic narratives.<sup>15</sup> What about the stories of Vitalija and Natalija? Do they present a challenge to the 'state-centric heroic' narrative?

According to Smolskutė, women resistance fighters in Lithuania were unlikely to challenge gender roles by trying to establish themselves as leaders of partisan units or political organizations. The stories

<sup>12</sup> Arvydas Anušauskas presents a case for genocide in *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas 1940–1958*, (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> James V. Wertsch, 'Collective Memory' in *Memory in the Mind and Culture*, ed. by Pascal Boyer and James W. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> Nicola Henry, *War and Rape: Law, Memory and Justice* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

of Vitalija and Natalija support this finding – both women saw themselves as performing supporting roles in the resistance movement. Their duties included delivering messages, packages, publishing underground newspapers (Natalija) and making fake documents (Natalija). Serving as messengers was not easy. Sometimes the tasks were very dangerous, such as transporting and hiding weapons, even machine guns. However, it was not fear that became the most lasting traumatic memory. It was betrayal.

By dwelling on the trauma of betrayal, the stories of Vitalija and Natalija complicate the state-centric account of the war of resistance which portrays the war as a heroic, relentless fight involving the forces of good (the Lithuanian nation, primarily represented by the resistance fighters) against evil (the Soviet occupiers). Some of those who fought on the 'good' side betrayed other resistance fighters. During the war of resistance, there was no full 'national unity'.

Undeniably, the resistance movement was infiltrated by Soviet spies; however, betrayal by acquaintances, neighbors and even people who were considered friends was especially painful. The shock of betrayal by an acquaintance, also a messenger, is featured in Natalija's account of her involvement in the resistance. She thinks that another messenger, a woman named Burkevičiūtė, betrayed her for 'dirty' money promised by the occupiers. Natalija finds it difficult to explain the acts of betrayal that were committed by other resistance fighters: 'I still do not know why there were so many traitors among us....' She recounts that under enormous pressure many fighters did betray their friends; however, the traitors later became unwanted even by 'their new masters' and ended up in prison themselves.

In her written memoir Natalija elaborates on the various techniques that the KGB used to obtain information. For example, she explains how, after three sleepless nights, she found another woman, named Budreikienė, in her cell. She pretended to be a fellow prisoner, but she was in fact a prison spy. Natalija suggests that she shared some sensitive information with Budreikienė: 'At that time I did not know that she was a prison spy. When a human being loses faith in another human being, then there is a terrible darkness. One day, coming back from an interrogation, I did not find her [in the cell]. She did her dirty job and left.'<sup>16</sup>

Parts of Vitalija's story also show that resistance was a complex societal phenomenon, and its participants often struggled with

<sup>16</sup> 'Natalija Gudonytė', p. 56.

internal tensions, fears, anxieties and traumas. She confided that one time, when she was taken for questioning by *stribai* who found a notebook with partisan songs in her house, the resistance fighters were 'really afraid that I would be a traitor'. Vitalija did not hide the fact that she was in pain and distress – 'my mittens were wet... when I tried to wipe my face, I found out that my lips were bloody...' Like Natalija, she remembers someone whom she trusted completely and who violated her trust. Vitalija has difficulty forgiving him: 'He lived in Jonava and died recently; I found out from reading our newspaper [*Tremtinys* (Deportee)]. It is a pity that I did not visit him before he died...'

In both stories, narratives about betrayal include critiques of the current political order. Natalija echoes Vitalija's discontent with the lack of transitional justice in post-Soviet Lithuania: 'There were so many traitors. You would sit, talk with a person and you would never know... some traitors today are respected more than victims in Lithuania. [It is important] to know the truth; know what's black and what's white. It is a pity that our current government does not see it and does not want to talk about it'. As this quote suggests, paradoxically, Natalija and Vitalija plea for a clear-cut evaluation of the past; however, their own accounts about this past reveal the complexities and tensions associated with memorialization of the past and its evaluation.

### Remembering Trauma, Creating Political Discourse

In her path breaking book *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Jenny Edkins points out the ways in which nation-states and societies attempt to silence the survivors of traumas: 'In contemporary culture victimhood offers sympathy and pity in return for the surrender of any political voice'.<sup>17</sup> She raises a crucial question – 'Is there any way in which survivors can or do resist these processes of medicalization and depoliticization?'<sup>18</sup>

The stories of Vitalija and Natalija and political activities provide useful insights into this question. Both women belong to the Lietuvos Politinių Kalinių ir Tremtinių Sąjunga (Union of Lithuanian Political Prisoners and Deportees, LPKTS), which represents the political interests of former political prisoners and deportees. This organization is often ridiculed

<sup>17</sup> Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

by its political opponents for its militancy. Its female members, for example, are sometimes referred to as the *megztosios beretės*, 'knitted berets'. The members of this organization are visible during commemorations of mass traumatic events, such as mass deportations conducted under Stalin, and they demand a full condemnation of Soviet crimes and trials for the perpetrators.

Allied with Tėvynės Sąjunga-Lietuvos Krikščionys Demokratai (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats), the main nationalist party, the LPKTS was able to achieve some of its major political goals, such as restitution for losses experienced during Soviet times and a prohibition against denying the Soviet genocide (i.e., the mass deportations and political repression carried out under Stalin). Lithuania's conservative political parties, including the LPKTS, have also tried, along with other conservative parties in post-Communist Europe, to get various European institutions to condemn the crimes that were committed by totalitarian communist regimes. In 2006, for example, politicians from the Baltic States and Poland were able to get the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to pass a resolution condemning such crimes. Maria Mälksoo describes such attempts as aiming 'to enlarge the mnemonic vision of 'the united Europe' by placing their 'subaltern pasts' in contest with the conventionally Western European-bent understanding of the consequences of World War II in Europe'.<sup>19</sup>

The nationalist motifs that permeate the stories of Vitalija and Natalija represent the current political discourse of the political organization to which they belong. Their individual narratives of extreme suffering represent a condemnation of the previous regime. Their narratives become political acts, expressions of non-negotiable political agendas.

Undeniably, as Jenny Edkins argues, communicating trauma is not easy, and many witnesses choose not to give testimony. Giving testimony about suffering means that the experience has to be presented as a coherent narrative, and it is difficult to communicate the 'immediacy of traumatic recall'.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the survivors of traumatic events feel like it is their duty to speak and thus preserve the memory of those who were not able to survive. As Edkins puts it, 'it is both impossible to speak, and it is impossible not to speak'.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Maria Mälksoo, 'The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe' *The European Journal of International Relations*, Nr. 15 (2009), p. 653.

<sup>20</sup> Edkins, p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Natalija describes the ways in which she was tortured in the prison cells of the KGB, which were below ground level:

I never could imagine such methods of torture and such ways of treating people. We were traitors, enemies... I heard everything... such nasty words... It was difficult to survive in those cellars without any sleep... And those nasty words. They called me a prostitute and so on... it was cruel and it was disgusting... and... those investigators, speaking Russian. But then the Lithuanians were not much better. Sometimes I would spend the whole night without being asked anything. I was forced to sit in one place without moving; just sit, period. I had to put my hands on my thighs; you couldn't cross your legs nor anything... you couldn't lean against anything, not even against the wall... the chair was fixed to the floor. If you fell, they would pour water on your head and so it went... the same thing over and over again. ...

Vitalija's story of abuse by a male supervisor in Siberia exhibits similar strong emotions and documentation of the abuses of human rights. She recalls being told to undress, then severely beaten. Vitalija condemns the regime's suppression of religious rights by remembering that her torture became even worse when the perpetrator saw a rosary that she wore around her neck. Vitalija suggests the impossibility of being able to fully describe the experience of life as a political prisoner and deportee. She says: 'I was beaten severely, deported to Siberia... my head was hit so many times it is amazing that I still remember anything... But my memory is not perfect. We did not keep diaries, you know'.

Both women's stories highlight the inhumanity and cruelty of their male captors. They do not mention rape, nor do they dwell on the other types of humiliation that women who were tortured for their political activities experienced, such as being denied items necessary for personal hygiene during menstruation. The cultural norms which impose silence when it comes to discussing issues such as menstruation may have affected their narratives.

The ways in which stories are told – what is remembered and what is forgotten – are influenced not only by cultural values, but other variables as well, including current political and social structures. Vitalija and Natalija condemn not only the crimes committed under Stalin, but life in Soviet Lithuania after Stalin's death as well. They denounce the lack of freedom and the social and political discrimination that former deportees experienced in Soviet Lithuania, thus contradicting those who argue that Soviet Lithuania provided a stable and somewhat comfortable life for Soviet citizens. An on-going debate about how to remember Soviet Lithuania, especially after Stalin's death, may have shaped their narratives.

The stories of Vitalija and Natalija about their return to Soviet Lithuania are similar to the stories of other former deportees and political prisoners. Their social interactions in Soviet Lithuania were poisoned by an awareness of 'otherness'. They, the former deportees and political prisoners, were different. The stories of the two women about Siberia also suggest that it was somewhat easier to be a 'patriot' in Siberia than in Soviet Lithuania. It was easier to express feelings and beliefs in Siberia without fear of reprisal. In Soviet Lithuania, the freedom of expression was limited.

Although their narratives mention disenchantment with their lives in Soviet Lithuania, neither Natalija nor Vitalija expressed a desire to go back to Siberia. (Some former deportees, disillusioned with Soviet Lithuania, actually wanted to go back.) According to Vitalija, 'we lived in Kairėnai, in a small room, close to a psychiatric hospital. It was rough, but it was still Lithuania. Well... all of my life was rough.'

According to Natalija, she had three herrings and twenty-five rubles when she began the journey back to Soviet Lithuania. 'I had no parents, nobody, only distant relatives. There were eight of us in a small room... Then I tried to find a job... through acquaintances'. She tells how her former classmate and good friend, Petrė, refused to help her find a job: 'When I was looking for a job [in education], Petrė told me, 'Stop looking, those like you will never find a job'. See, she was a Communist already then. I told Petrė that I was not there to see her, but I wanted to see the Minister of Education. And then I left and started to cry. Once I ran into her, but I looked the other way. I thought to myself, 'what a pig' ... Eventually, my Jewish friend Kašmanaitė finally found me a job because she knew what it was like to be deported.'

Natalija thus summarizes her experiences in Soviet Lithuania: 'It is better not to remember the first five years in my homeland, and it is better not to talk about them. This is a dark page with one bloody entry – [I was treated as] a traitor, a criminal'.<sup>22</sup>

Another current political debate – about whether Communism should be condemned not only as it was practiced, but also as an ideology – is reflected in the ways in which the past is remembered and what is remembered. In her written memoir, Natalija describes the discussions she had with prisoners from various other countries about the

<sup>22</sup> 'Natalija Gudonytė', p. 73.

Communist system and whether Communism in theory was tolerable.<sup>33</sup> Natalija writes that there were different opinions in the camp about how to evaluate Communism. The LPKTS currently condemns Communism not only as it was practiced, but also as a theory. This view, however, is not shared by everyone in Lithuania and is certainly not shared in western Europe.

### Remembering Deportation, Creating a Gendered Account

The stories of Vitalija and Natalija about their experiences in labor camps in Siberia focus on food preparation and bonding with other women and children – economic and social roles traditionally associated with women. Food preparation is especially prominent in Natalija's story, as the routine of food preparation acquires a new meaning and importance in a labor camp: 'We tried to celebrate all holidays. Oh, we have some bread – this will be for Christmas. Every day, I would put a piece of bread aside. Sometimes I hid it in the snow to make sure that no one would eat it... And then later we would gather all these pieces of bread together, warm them up, mix them up, and make a 'cake' (*tortas*). We would think of different ways to celebrate'.

Natalija's story is punctuated with memories about the lack of food in Siberia: 'We got some water for tea in the morning and then many little fish... the fish were so incredibly salty. We were so hungry, but there was no water... You want to eat, and that's it. So many women ate those little salty fish, and their bodies became incredibly hairy... See, if you were working and did not fulfill the required quota, you did not get any bread. [If you fulfilled the required quota,] then you would get 250 grams of bread. The bread looked like a cube. I remember taking that bread into my hand, smelling it – somehow this bread would disappear – and I would lose all memory of eating it'.

Survival was possible because women of different nationalities, from different parts of the world cooperated in completing 'manly' tasks, such as cutting wood, pulling up stumps or working in a mica factory. (Mica is a type of stone.) According to Natalija, 'there was a special relationship [among women], a certain kind of love... Everyone tried to survive. If someone was ill, we tried to help them... Then there was unexpected laughter, a song – and somehow that pain would go away'.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 63.



The sense of nationalism, often exclusive, which is so present at the beginning of women's stories when they talk about the war of resistance, is mostly absent from their stories about their lives in deportation. There is one common goal – survival, and it appears that it helped to erase other lines of division.

Vitalija remembers cooperation and singing as ways of survival in the labor camp:

I remember one Christmas Eve. It was morning; we were transported to work – Poles, Ukrainians and Lithuanians in the morning. And one of us, Balys, started to sing. And the Poles and the Ukrainians started to sing as well. The local Russians took off their hats to show respect... The local Russians were good people. We women had to cut wood. We had to turn pieces of wood around. Sometimes I would just hang there [from a piece of wood]. I recall one little Russian coming over and telling me, *Vika, chto ty delayesh, ne budyesh rozhat*, 'Vika, what are you doing, you'll be infertile'. Yes, the local Russians were superb people....

Later Vitalija describes a job that she had in a boarding pre-school in Siberia. There she discovered a love for children of different ethnicities: 'it did not matter to me whether they were Russians or not'.

In her story about her experiences in the labor camp and her interaction with other women, Natalija highlights her urban origins, which set her apart from the other women: 'Our [Lithuanian] girls were wonderful; nice, girls from villages, you know... They were different [from me]. But we became very close there. They read very little. Having graduated from high school, I had read a lot. I used to tell them stories from novels; they loved that! Later they wrote to me in their letters: when they were listening to my stories, I forgot their pain. I gave them lessons in geography...' However, having to complete 'manly' and challenging tasks helped to overcome not only ethnic, but also class divisions: 'We laughed together, and thus we were able to complete hard tasks [such as pulling out stumps]. So that's why you see that we are laughing in photographs taken in Siberia.'

### The Duties of Memory

According to Lenz and Bjerg, there is a clear division of roles in the process of constructing national meta-narratives about the past. Men are assigned what appears to be a more important role in narrating, interpreting and collecting

factual evidence about the past; they serve as 'theme-givers'. Women, on the other hand, are likely to focus on family stories and to act as 'theme-takers'. Men tend to serve as the creators of a 'collective encyclopedia' about the national past, while women are likely to focus on their family albums. In this gendered system, men are seen as brave warriors and resistance fighters, while women are likely to play the supporting role of helpers.<sup>14</sup>

Like the stories of other women acting as agents of memory, the stories of Natalija and Vitalija demonstrate the interdependent relationship between creating a 'collective encyclopedia' and gathering pictures for family albums. Vitalija likes talking about her brother Antanas. In fact, her identity as a woman resistance fighter is inseparable from that of being Antanas' helper. Given the status of her brother as a famous resistance fighter, Vitalija's stories enter the public realm and become part of 'collective encyclopedic' knowledge about the war of resistance. Not surprisingly, Vitalija did not address the more controversial aspects of her brother's partisan activities (e.g., there are stories about how Antanas, together with a fellow resistance fighter, killed an entire Lithuanian family in 1949<sup>15</sup>); her story is affected by and is part of the so-called 'fighting and suffering narrative' about the Lithuanian war of resistance and mass deportations.

In contrast, brave male warriors are curiously absent in Natalija's story. Her narrative focuses on her traumatic experiences of being imprisoned and deported. Natalija showed me an extensive collection of memory objects well known to anyone familiar with the traumatic history of deportations – rosaries made of bread, letters and poems written on birch bark, objects knitted using fish bones, and photographs, many photographs. 'All this will be given to an archive,' Natalija promises. 'I gathered all this, she says, and I do not want to lose it. What you see here is tears, pain, love – whatever you can imagine, you will find it here... My drawers are full of memories.'

Natalija's memory duties include collecting objects of memory from former deportees – their pictures, their stories, and publishing them as albums and books. One of her recent books, *Naikintos bet nenugalėtos kartos kelias* ('The Path of a Generation which was Decimated but not Overcome'), consists of photographs from the personal albums of former political prisoners and deportees. Currently Vitalija considers finding

<sup>14</sup> Claudia Lenz, Helle Berg, 'To be Honest I don't Think She Has Much to Say...' Gender and Authority in Memoirs of the Second World War in Denmark and Norway', *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of Finnish Anthropological Society*, 32, 4 (2007), pp. 34–44.

<sup>15</sup> Jurgis Jurgelis, 'Pagerbtas smurtas – pažemintos aukos', [www.DELFI.lt](http://www.DELFI.lt) (9 November 2010).

the remains of her brother and marking the place where he killed himself to avoid being captured as her duty of memory.

## Conclusions

Despite their involvement in different types of resistance, the two women described in this chapter had some things in common – their experiences of torture, betrayal and exile, the trauma of coming back from Siberia to Soviet Lithuania, and their dissatisfaction with the lack of transitional justice in post-Soviet Lithuania. Their narratives are influenced by the national meta-narrative about fighting and suffering during the postwar era (this is especially true about Vitalija's story).

Neither Vitalija nor Natalija played leading roles in the resistance movement; however, they understood the importance of being helpers. The fact that they are women has affected the content of their narratives, especially in the case of their experiences in the labor camps (e.g., Natalija's narrative about food). It is probably fair to say that care-giving had an important role in both narratives. Natalija remembered her friendship with and the supportive relationships between other women in the labor camp, as they supported each other during difficult times. Vitalija remembered her experience as a caretaker in a boarding pre-school. (Similar observations have been put forward by scholars studying women in the Holocaust. Acts of cooperation among women were important for survival in the concentration camps. Hunger dominates the Holocaust narratives, and women's responses to hunger were different than those of men.)

Including women's stories in the discourse about resistance helps to broaden the discourse about resistance, and (hopefully) deconstructs the image of the nation as a fighting and suffering hero (i.e., the male narrative). Women's stories raise numerous other questions, such as: What were the relations between the resistance fighters and their families? How did they cope with the trauma of betrayal? Which stories are still not heard? According to Judith Greenberg, who has studied women in the French resistance during World War II, one of the most important functions of including women in the study of resistance is to make sure that 'a fixed idea of resistance' is resisted.<sup>36</sup> Resistance is a very complex, multi-layered

<sup>36</sup> Judith Greenberg, 'Paths of Resistance: French Women Working from Inside', in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust*, edited by Elizabeth Baer and Myrna Goldenberg, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p. 157.

phenomenon; its participants were often tortured by betrayal and trauma. This insight can be applied to the Lithuanian war of resistance and to the discourses surrounding it as well. In her written memoir Natalija describes an interrogation session in which she tried to explain to the interrogator the affect which World War II and the anti-Soviet war of resistance had had on Lithuanians: 'I explained to him that the wars that took place in our lands confused people in such a way that it was difficult to understand who wanted what'.<sup>17</sup> Raising more questions about the war of resistance and complicating the national metanarrative are probably the most important contributions of the stories of the two women presented in this essay.

<sup>17</sup> 'Natalija Gudonytė', p. 73.

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė

## Hegemony or Legitimacy? Assembling Soviet Deportations in Lithuanian Museums

Knowledge about the Soviet deportations of people from Lithuania, to use the expression of Bruno Latour, was produced in public and used to shape a new public around it.<sup>1</sup> In 1987, former political prisoners and deportees from Lithuania organised the first public meetings to commemorate the victims of deportations. To be sure, this was not the first time that knowledge about the deportations and the labour camps had entered Soviet public discourse. Originally published in Russian in 1962, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was translated and published in Lithuanian in 1963.<sup>2</sup> A story about the return of Latvian deportees, dramatized by Latvian television in the popular television drama series *A Long Journey through the Dunes* (1980), also had a broad appeal.

However, these were just cracks in the wall of censorship that would crumble under the flood of information released in the late 1980s. In 1988, the last political prisoners from the Baltic States were released from Soviet prison camps and Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's memoir, entitled *Lithuanians at the Laptev Sea* was published in Lithuanian.<sup>3</sup> Several events in 1989 signalled the end of the era when the deportations were confined

<sup>1</sup> Bruno Latour, 'From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public', in Bruno Latour & Peter Weibel (eds), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> By way of contrast, Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (written in 1958–1967, published in 1973) was translated and published in Lithuanian only in 2009. An illegal publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* in Russian was printed and circulated in Lithuania in 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 161. Grinkevičiūtė's story *Lithuanian Deportees in Yakutia* was originally printed in Russian and circulated by Moscow samizdat in 1979. A small memorial museum for Grinkevičiūtė was organised by enthusiasts in her temporary workplace in Laukuva. 'Laptev Sea Exiles Indict', in *Lithuanians in the Arctic* (Vilnius: The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre in Lithuania, 2010), p. 13. See also Violeta Davoliūtė, 'Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė' *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 36, Nr. 1 (2005), pp. 51–68.

to private conversation. July 14 was declared a day of mourning and hope, to commemorate the beginning of mass deportations on that date in 1941. A conference about deportations and a public rally 'Lithuania Deported' were organised in Vilnius. The Lithuanian Historical and Ethnographic Museum arranged an exhibition about deportations which displayed some secret documents.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the publication of memoirs, histories and documents, numerous events were organized to commemorate those who were tortured and killed in Soviet prisons, concentration camps and deportation settlements. Some of these events assumed a highly theatrical form: coffins with the remains of those who died in the deportation were brought back to Lithuania and paraded down the main city streets; for example, one such procession took place on Pilies street in Vilnius on 29 July 1989. The Deportee club (renamed the Union of Lithuania's Political Prisoners and Deportees (ULPPD) in 1990) organised twelve expeditions to the sites of deportations. The ULPPD alone brought back the remains of about 1,500 individuals to Lithuania; others were brought back by private individuals. Since then, expeditions to Yakutia, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Tomsk, Komi, Altai, Norilsk and other places have been organised regularly with the aim of returning the remains of those who died in deportation, to collect and record information, and to maintain cemeteries.

Pilgrimages to deportation sites continued into the 2000s. Such trips gained a new impetus when 'The Siberia Mission' was launched in 2006 by the Lithuanian Youth Organisation.<sup>5</sup> The year 2011 was designated as the 'The Year of Commemoration of the Defense of Freedom and the Great Losses', with numerous public presentations on the history of deportations and the commemoration of deportees, ranging from the screenings of documentaries on 'The Siberia Mission' in London, to the exhibition 'The Return' at the Lithuanian National Museum in Vilnius.

Since the 1970s, the Soviet Gulag has been rather widely known in Western countries thanks to the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). The Baltic case was advocated by émigrés in the West, calling for greater awareness about Soviet crimes against humanity. Indeed, the first list of deported Lithuanians was produced by the Lithuanian Bureau of Mutual Aid as early as 1942. However, some Western

<sup>4</sup> Vanda Kažauskienė, 'Sąjūdis – tautos istorinės atminties versmė' in *Lietuvos Sąjūdis ir valstybės idealų įgyvendinimas* (Vilnius: LII, 2005), pp. 240–254.

<sup>5</sup> *Sugrįžimas* (Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, 2011).

scholars maintained a sceptical or critical attitude towards commemoration ceremonies that expressed, in their view, an exclusionist, ethnocentric sense of national identity.<sup>6</sup>

To be sure, some scholars as, for instance, Anne Applebaum and Timothy Snyder have made efforts to overcome the bias of those who tend to overlook the crimes of communism.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, other scholars continue to discern 'a hegemonic ethnic-Lithuanian nationalist discourse' casting ethnic Lithuanians as passive victims, and criticise this discourse as a conscious strategy of Lithuanians for avoiding their own responsibility for the traumatic events of the era, particularly the extermination of Lithuanian Jews. This argument has been expressed rather strongly in the fields of cultural history and memory studies, which focused on monuments, museums and other forms of the public use of history.<sup>8</sup> Some of this kind of contemporary history writing is problematic due to the fast evolving nature of the processes analysed. James Mark, for example, draws generalizations from his analyses of unfinished exhibition displays, and focuses on certain museums while ignoring others.<sup>9</sup> There is also a temptation to interpret state cultural organisations, such as museums, as a direct dissemination of the government's official version of the history or even as an embodiment of the 'attitudes' of the ethnic majority. In the case of Lithuania, it has become habitual to interpret certain narratives about the deportations as 'hegemonic' expressions of officially sanctioned ethnic nationalism.

<sup>6</sup> The emphasis on the suffering of Lithuanian deportees was described as a competitive 'martyrology' and a dangerous phenomenon that implicitly and often explicitly competed with other historical disasters that took place in Lithuania, particularly the Holocaust. See Eva-Clarita Petrai, 'The Convergence of Two Worlds: Historians and Emerging Histories in the Baltic States', Martyn Housden @ David J. Smith (eds), *Forgotten Pages in Baltic History: Diversity and Inclusion* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 263–80. The real situation is more complex. Even in his controversial comparisons of the Soviet deportations and Nazi crimes, Member of the European Parliament Vytautas Landsbergis stresses that it was 'Lithuanians, Jews and Poles' who were deported from Lithuania to the Soviet Union. This statement was made during the International Congress for the Evaluation of Communist Crimes in 2000. Vytautas Landsbergis, 'Condemned to No Return', *Lithuanians in the Arctic* (Vilnius: The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre in Lithuania, 2010), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most outspoken critic of Western ignorance of communist crimes is Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (London: Penguin, 2004); and more recently Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> I argue elsewhere that Lithuanians are presented as both victims and perpetrators in the Lithuanian museums of the Holocaust and communist crimes. Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, 'Institutional Entrepreneurs of a Difficult Past: The Organisation of Knowledge Regimes in Post-Soviet Lithuanian Museums' *European Studies* (forthcoming, 2012).

This chapter presents a critique of the tendency to interpret narratives about the past as presented in Lithuanian state museums as a hegemonic and driven by some coherent state policy. First, I suggest that this kind of interpretation relies on simplistic assumptions about the process of knowledge production and the work of state cultural policy and cultural organisations. I would like to show that the production of public knowledge about Soviet deportations is not a linear, top-down process driven by the government. Instead, it is a messy and heterogeneous process that encompasses many types of different actors, guided by different rationales and is influenced by changing material, economic, political and social contexts. Second, I would like to introduce an analytical distinction of legitimate and hegemonic narratives of publicly distributed versions of history. The narratives featured in Presidential speeches, government programmes and museum mission statements could certainly be understood as legitimate. It is important to note that legitimate narratives can be quite insignificant when it comes to practices. It is quite obvious that verbal discourses often tend to be 'just words'. A look at the production of the museum exhibitions of Soviet deportations reveals a counter-intuitive reality that the discourse of victimisation is consolidated only in official verbal discourses, which are not easily translated into well-funded cultural organisations, systematic academic research and popular dissemination. Stories about Soviet deportations of Lithuania's population are precisely this kind of legitimate discourse which is manifest in written texts, but which struggle to command the material resources necessary to for canonisation in museums. Stories about Soviet deportations are legitimate, but are they really hegemonic in the public regimes of history?

This discrepancy between hegemonic and legitimate derives in part from the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by state cultural sector organisations. The public or state-financed cultural sector is not a homogeneous unit that blindly conveys the government's attitude towards the past. Furthermore, the Lithuanian state museum sector is neither unitary nor homogenous. Probably the only features common to all Lithuanian state museums are a low degree of professionalization, a chronic lack of funding and a systematic practice of research-based collection. The historical narratives presented in the state museums were materially assembled and verbally articulated by many different groups and individuals associated with state and non-state organisations. Collections pertaining to recent history were assembled on the basis of donations – not purposive acquisitions. The Lithuanian museums, therefore, are better understood as constituents



in a particular economy of gift-giving, and not as the broadcasters of some coherent 'state ethno-nationalist ideology'.

### Whither Memory in the Museums?

This contention requires a revision of some recent studies about how 'collective memory' is constructed by museums. During the last two decades, a large volume of literature has discerned a great variety of entities such as 'collective memory', 'mass memory', 'ethnic memory', 'cultural memory', 'social memory' and 'public memory', to mention just a few examples.<sup>10</sup>

In this literature, 'memory' came to signify a particular mode of knowledge production. Drawing on the etymology of the Latin 'memoria', which means reminding or bringing to mind, memory was taken to connote a general capacity to stabilise and bring forth, to activate.<sup>11</sup> Just like in electronic engineering, memory is conceived not as a passive, but as an active and structuring material. Memory was opposed to other types of knowledge production and came to be used in a politicized manner, reflecting the convergence of developments in history and social science, and a growing political populism that relied on public knowledge regimes about the past.

'Memory' was initially introduced as a category for sociological research by Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945). In *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, he sought to bridge the gap between sociology, focused on large formations like groups and societies; and psychology, which studied memory processes on the individual level.<sup>12</sup> According to

<sup>10</sup> Historians have recently approached memory as having an independent ontology, the status of which is rarely examined. See Jan Werner-Müller (ed.) *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); or James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. xi. Young insightfully argued against the naive use of psychoanalytical categories in studies of public commemoration. He also proposed the notion of 'collected memories' as more useful than 'collective memory', a proposition that hints at the danger of using nouns that contribute to the reification of the phenomenon in question. For example, nouns can acquire verbs and adjectives and in this way 'collective memory' as a noun becomes a world unto itself. The outcomes of this semiotic process are evident in the studies published in Werner-Müller's edited volume, which give hardly any information about the sources from which the postulated 'collective memories' are discerned. For a good and brief overview of the proliferation of taxonomies of 'really existing memories' see Andreas Kitzmann, Conny Mithander, John Sundholm, 'Introduction', in Andreas Kitzmann, Conny Mithander, John Sundholm (eds) *Memory Work: The Theory and Practice of Memory* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 9–23.

<sup>11</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com).

<sup>12</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 38.

Halbwachs, individual memories depend upon the groups to which the individual belongs at that time, and which give individuals the very means to shape their memories: 'what makes recent memories hang together,' he writes, is 'that they are part of the totality of thoughts common to a group'.<sup>13</sup> Through the work of Jan Assman and John Czaplicka, Halbwachs's ontology of collective memory as an observable phenomenon with which individual memories 'interact' was channelled into a fast-expanding historical and cultural research agenda on collective memory.<sup>14</sup>

The distinction between the individual and society as separate entities which are connected in various ways was further reinforced by the emergent discipline of oral history, keen to introduce non-expert verbal accounts as a valid primary source for historical research.<sup>15</sup> 'Memory' as a non-expert verbal account eventually was reified into a world unto itself: epistemology became ontology and soon it was possible to venture into 'a realm of memory' and explore 'the universe of memory'. Any seemingly consistent discourse could be labelled as 'a collective memory'.

It is against this background that one should understand the establishment of a 'naïve' notion of 'collective memory' that exists 'out there', and that can be scientifically researched and politically acted-upon. Perhaps the best example of such approach is collective memory studies that focus on heritage and museums. For instance, Pierre Nora and Jacques Le Goff, held that the state museums somehow by themselves effortlessly constitute 'collective memory'.<sup>16</sup> However, museums dwell on the boundaries of many different worlds: social, economic, natural scientific and political.<sup>17</sup> The historical origins of a museum can be extremely diverse.<sup>18</sup> The very existence of a museum hardly proves anything: examples of museums established thanks to the quirk of a moment and museums with a high official status which have little influence on the society abound.<sup>19</sup> What does a branch of the Museum

<sup>13</sup> Halbwachs, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Jan Assman & John Czaplicka, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, Nr. 65 (1995), pp. 125–133.

<sup>15</sup> Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (eds), *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> See Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 88.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Leigh Star & James R. Griesemer, 'Institutional Ecology, "Translations" and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39' *Social Studies of Science*, 19, Nr. 3, (1989), pp. 387–420.

<sup>18</sup> Simon J. Knell, Peter Aronsson, Arne Bugge Amundsen et al., *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World* (London & New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Hence Stuart Burch and Ulf Zander are not quite correct to assume that 'the very existence' of the museums of occupation in the Baltic States testifies to a 'preoccupation with the past'. The very existence of

of Devils, part of the Čiurlionis Art Museum, the highly canonical national institution in Lithuania, prove just 'by itself'? My approach, consequently, is closer to the one articulated by Ian Hacking who warned scholars to be more sensitive about grouping diverse interests under the term 'memory'.<sup>20</sup>

A particular museum, or, to be more precise, a certain part of a particular museum may or may not be framed via verbal discourses as an attempt to construct 'a collective memory'. This is especially evident in the case of new history museums in Lithuania dealing with the twentieth century. Often being newly established, emergent organizations, these new museums are pressed to formulate consistent rationales and deploy coherent and premeditated tactics of collecting and exhibiting objects. However, in reality the museums are often organised in an *ad hoc* way. Struggling to survive economically, not all of these museums had any energy left to engage in research-based, pro-active collecting. Some of them bear the clear stamp of being mere depositories, accepting objects from generous, but not scientifically systematic donors. The new museums and expositions analysed below are better understood as assemblages in progress.

This process of material and conceptual assembling of the recent past takes place through complex and messy attempts at stabilising knowledge and social relations. The exhibitions about deportations in Lithuanian museums could best be understood as material performances of gift-giving, which, according to Lizette Gradén, is 'a plea for a presence in the future'. In her studies of the assembling of Swedish heritage in the US, Gradén emphasised that in certain contexts gift-giving practices are especially powerful as a material performance, which cements the community of donors and asks for furthering a relationship between donors and future generations.<sup>21</sup> Gift-giving is not a neutral action of benevolence, but a strong force which structures museum displays as a materialisation of the gift-givers community. The Lithuanian museums

many of these museums in question is a much more complex phenomenon and in no way an indication of effortless consensus. See Stuart Burch and Ulf Zander, 'Preoccupied by the Past: The Case of Estonia's Museum of Occupations' *Tidskriften Scandia* Vol. 74, Nr. 2 (2008), p. 53–54.

<sup>20</sup> Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 3. Academic research about 'collective memory' should also be included in such an inquiry: 'memory' became a useful discursive tool for academics to tap into politically distributed resources.

<sup>21</sup> Lizette Gradén, 'Dressed in a Present from the Past: The Transfers and Transformations of a Swedish Bridal Crown in the United States' *Culture Unbound*, Nr. 2 (2010), p. 698. See also Lizette Gradén, 'Performing Nordic Spaces in the Scandinavian Museums in the US' in *Performing Nordic Heritage*, eds. Lizette Gradén and Peter Aronsson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).

of deportations demonstrate that gift-giving is especially significant when other ways of obtaining exhibits are limited.

In Lithuania, gift-giving did not only play an important role in materially sustaining particular communities of former deportees and political prisoners, but also contributed to the placement of certain stories in the museums. Gift-giving as a mode of production of the museum collections and exhibitions explains the discrepancy between the rather coherent verbal discourse about the Soviet deportations, formulated in government documents and parliamentary speeches, and the fragmented stories assembled in the museums.

### Assembling Deportations in the Museums

Since 1990, many history museums in Lithuania have installed exhibitions dedicated to the deportations.<sup>22</sup> Three museums in particular feature the biggest and best developed exhibitions about the Soviet deportations: the Open Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius and the Ninth Fort Museum in Kaunas. In 1992, the Museum of Genocide Victims was established in Vilnius, but permanent expositions about the Gulag (1944–1956) and deportations (1944–1953) were installed only in 2006. In 1992, a yurt representing a type of dwelling in which deportees lived near the Laptev Sea was erected at the Open Air Museum. In 1990–1992, the exhibition was reorganised to display the deportations at the Ninth Fort museum.

The museums are generally well attended. In 2011 the Museum of Genocide Victims attracted 56,485 visitors, the Open Air Museum – 78,294 visitors (although there is no data about the number of visitors to the Sector for Deportations and Resistance), and the Ninth Fort Museum received 89,682 visitors. School students made a large share of the visitors (the Museum of Genocide Victims 13,480, the Open Air Museum 6,684 and the Ninth Fort Museum 40,036).<sup>23</sup>

High attendance numbers, of course, tell us nothing about the dissemination of the stories presented in the museum displays: it must be remembered that these stories and objects are open to different interpretations.

<sup>22</sup> Significant collections were accumulated and exhibitions about deportations were installed in Kaunas City Museum and 'Aušra' Museum in Šiauliai. In the 2000s, Grūtas Soviet statue park also installed a section dedicated to deportations.

<sup>23</sup> The data is from the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture.

However, the attendance numbers suggest that these museums are important sites that can potentially have an impact on public knowledge.

### The Deportees' Yurt at the Open Air Museum

The first example features a yurt, a mud dwelling used by exiles to the Laptev Sea. This yurt can be treated as a gift from the deportees to the Museum: it was not commissioned from above. The building was designed and its construction was initiated not by the museum workers but by a former deportee Rymantas Putvis. The yurt as a heritage site was physically maintained by members of the Laptev Sea society, who also provided explanatory narratives. Being a gift, the yurt was not subject to standards of authenticity and the precision of traditional museum practices.

The idea of donating the yurt emerged during an informal conversation among former deportees. In his memoirs, Jonas Markauskas, one of the initiators of the yurt recalls the spring of 1991 as 'a happy time, full of hope, when well-meaning people found quick solutions to problems'. He visited the museum department at the Ministry of Culture and Education to discuss this idea. Although the Ministry did not offer any official commitment, Markauskas travelled to the Open Air Museum and proposed to build the yurt. The Museum's scientific board, however, rejected the proposal, arguing that the Museum was dedicated only to the period up to 1940, to which the deportees remarked that 'it was then a shame that we were deported in 1941 and not 1940'. The museum board was eventually convinced and works started on a site allocated in the summer of 1991.<sup>14</sup>

In this way the yurt was added to the Open Air Museum (est. 1968), a skansen-type open air museum, dedicated to traditional architecture, agricultural techniques and the folk culture of Lithuania's ethnic regions. Opened on 23 August 1992, the yurt was situated in a small meadow surrounded by a peaceful grove. The site also contained a small symbolic cemetery with crosses, meant to recall the cemeteries in Siberia, and a copy of a monument from a Jewish burial place in Bykov, Yakutia, built in June 2011. A train car, used to transport deportees, was added in 1996. Since its opening, the yurt has been guarded by former deportees who also served as guides. The deportees, mainly elderly retired women based in Kaunas, were not, however, either employed or in any other way compensated by the

<sup>14</sup> Jonas Markauskas, 'Tremties sektoriaus ekspozicija: dienoraščio puslapiai', *Gimtasai kraštas* (2009), available on the internet: [ziemgala.lt/lt/metraštis-gimtasai-krastas](http://ziemgala.lt/lt/metraštis-gimtasai-krastas).

museum administration for a long time (1992–1997). Markauskas recalls that the museum administration was unwilling to pay the yurt guide, which posed a problem, because without a guide the yurt could not be open to access by visitors. Indeed, for a number of years the guide was financed by donations from émigré Lithuanians.<sup>35</sup>

Even in 2011, the year officially designated by the Lithuanian Parliament as the Year of the Great Losses, the image of the yurt did not feature prominently in the public relations materials of the Open Air Museum. The Museum seems to prefer to publicise itself as a sunny and cheerful site of folk culture, set snugly in the idyllic pre-industrial countryside. Displacement and suffering, which were part of the everyday life of deportees, are presented as being at odds with the Museum's *raison d'être*. The self-description of the museum reads as follows:

In contrast to the cosy farmsteads, away from the ring road, separated by a grove, there stands an unusual structure covered with grass: a yurt and a cattle car with tiny windows, meshed with barbed wire. Having nothing to do with Lithuanian culture, these objects recall the painful period of deportations in 1941–1953, described in one sentence by the journalist Laima Kanopkienė: 'Men, who spoke a foreign language, crushed the crystal silence of the Lithuanian village with rifle butts.'<sup>36</sup>

Another curious observation is the tension between the rationale of the yurt and the rationale of the Museum. The Museum does not refer to 'memory' either in its website or mission statement, but rather to a direct transportation to the past: 'we are a live time machine, which will help you to stop the present, to move to the past and experience stories of objects, buildings and people'. The yurt, however, seeks only to 'remind' rather than to 'transport'. For example, upon my visit the guide welcomed visitors to the yurt by warning us 'not to even think' that the original yurts were like this one. The guide then gave a detailed account of how the yurt before us differed from the originals: the interior of the museum's yurt was built from small tree logs and the inside looks like a sauna or a Nordic summer chalet. The interiors of the original yurts at the Laptev Sea, however, were not lined with wood: the walls were made with mud. It was, the guide emphasised, only Russian teachers and NKVD officials who lived in wooden houses.<sup>37</sup> The

<sup>35</sup> Markauskas. The opening of the yurt, interestingly, stirred interest back in Yakutia: Yakut local television visited the Open Air Museum, donated some objects and produced a documentary film about deportations of 1941. *Laptevėliai* (Vilnius: VDA, 2000), p.24.

<sup>36</sup> See the Museum website: [lbm.lt/lt/ekspozicijos/jurta](http://lbm.lt/lt/ekspozicijos/jurta).

<sup>37</sup> Conversation with a guide to the yurt, the Open Air Museum, Rumšiškės (17 July 2011).

support structures of the original yurts were assembled of irregular pieces of driftwood that deportees collected with great labour; but the yurt at the Open Air Museum was built with ordinary, straight and regular logs and planks. To illustrate this discrepancy there is a small piece of crooked wood polished by the sea on display.

The story that the yurt and exhibited objects tell, in this way, is critically dependent on the presence of the guide. The yurt displays many objects, the origins and stories of which would be obscure without the guide's oral explanation, especially in the absence of comprehensive written commentaries. For example, a large dogs' sledge leans onto the wall; it is surprisingly new and in very good condition. This is because, according to the guide, the sledge was made in Kaunas not long time ago. There is, however, a small stack of authentic weathered wooden parts of similar sledges displayed in a corner. One exhibited oil lamp caused protests by survivors who insisted that no yurt had any such lamps, prompting the guide to speculate that this lamp perhaps belonged to the supervisor of the labour camp. Next to the lamp are several wooden instruments for processing fur: these instruments were donated by a documentary film-maker Petras Abuševičius (1928–1997). The author of two films about deportations (1993 and 1994), Abuševičius sadly died not long after he made this donation and for this reason the museum did not get any information about the origin of these objects. Nevertheless, out of respect for the film director, these wooden tools, which are certainly not from the Laptev Sea area, are kept on display. Some other objects, such as fishnets, are authentic, but from the 'wrong' area. Although Laptev Sea deportees used fishnets to fish on ice (and to produce their own clothes), the exhibited nets came from other, unidentified places in Siberia. Other things were not authentic, but made from original designs, drawn and sometimes produced by former deportees themselves. These include a metal stove that was produced in Kaunas according to a survivor's design, and a shiny new mug made from tin. The guide herself ordered this new mug, because the authentic one which she had brought with her from Laptev Sea was stolen after someone broke into the yurt a few years ago.

The site also contains a wagon car from a train which was used to carry out deportations, installed in 1996. The car was placed on authentic rails from 1905 with 15 sleepers, to symbolise the 15 Soviet republics.<sup>28</sup> In the car there are photograph displays with images from

<sup>28</sup> Markauskas.

expeditions to the Laptev Sea islands and an installation with portraits and personal information of those who were deported to Trofimovsk Island, although Laptev Sea deportees also lived on many other islands. A few years later a bunker that was used by anti-Soviet partisans was erected in the vicinity of the yurt. With the addition of the bunker, the site came to signify the trope of 'deportations and resistance', drawn from the legitimate post-Soviet narrative of the twentieth century. Legitimate, it should be stressed, but not hegemonic. The bunker for the most time is closed, because the Museum administration does not allocate a member of staff to supervise it, and the partisans themselves, according to Markauskas, are not fit anymore to act as voluntary guides.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the bunker is hidden so well that visitors often struggle to find it at all.

It can be concluded that the yurt performs, in the words of Latour's, as an assembly, but not as a representation. Never intended to be a precise reconstruction of the yurts used by deportees, it is rather an *ad hoc* assemblage that only loosely relates to the life of deportees on the Laptev Sea. The stories that are told at the yurt are fragmentary: not all sites where Lithuanians were settled are represented. Deportees of other ethnicities from the Laptev Sea area are not mentioned: Finns, for example, were mentioned only by the guide. The deportations of Poles and Russians were not acknowledged at all.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, such a site could in principle include a farmstead of some luckier deportees who managed to build their own houses, breed cattle and farm land in the Far East.

However, it was not the intention of the yurt's builders to create a comprehensive representation of the deportations. The yurt emerged as a result and as a monument to the collaboration of a particular group of survivors. As a gift, the yurt was meant to stabilise the existing community of the deportees to the Laptev Sea, and to further their presence into the future. As Markauskas put it:

At the Open Air Museum, the yurt was built with love, built well and meant to last. It is only the shape of the yurt which resembles the miserable yurts built in haste from accidental planks and sticks by Lithuanians in the North. But this does not prevent one from feeling a pervasive horror when listening to the stories told by Irena Špaukauskienė and other deportees.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Markauskas.

<sup>30</sup> Some of the survivors held strongly anti-Polish views. For example, in 2010 UPPD protested against a memorial plate for Józef Piłsudski in Druskininkai. 'Politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga piktinasi idėja įamžinti J. Piłsudskio atminimą Druskininkuose', Bernardinai.lt (19 August 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Markauskas.



## Deportations at the Museum of Genocide Victims

If the yurt is a good example of a gift to an existing museum, which sustains a community of givers, the exhibition about deportations at the Museum of Genocide Victims demonstrates that gift-giving can also be an important structuring force within the professional organisation of a new museum. The name and the nature of the exhibition at the Museum of Genocide Victims (MGV) are closely connected to the building in which the museum is situated: a former prison used by the Gestapo and the NKVD/MGB/KGB. The founding of the museum was also initiated by the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees. The MGV was first subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and Education, and in 1996 was transferred to the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (GRRC). The name and the contents of this Museum have been at a centre of ongoing debate, which I have analyzed elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> Here it should be noted that in 2011 the website of the museum no longer describes the Soviet deportations as genocide.

It is also interesting to note that the term 'memory' is used in the general mission statements of the Museum and the Research Centre, but 'memory' is absent in the particular descriptions of the exhibitions. The GRRC mission statement says that the centre conducts research, initiates juridical evaluation and 'eternalises the memory of victims of Soviet genocide and fighters for freedom'. The general goal is to 'recreate historical truth and justice'.<sup>33</sup> The Museum of Genocide Victims is part of the Memorial department and its building is meant to 'remind the contemporary generation' about the 'difficult and tragic years that Lithuania's people endured in 1940–1990'.<sup>34</sup> The Museum's self-presentation features words like 'eternalise' (*jaminti*) and 'remind' (*priminti*). Other verbs are more neutral: to 'familiarise', 'present', 'throw light on', 'research', 'study', 'record'. This vocabulary suggests that the Museum seeks to perform as a societal, political and academic institution. However, as one employee noticed, the principal

<sup>32</sup> Rindzevičiūtė, 2013.

<sup>33</sup> The Memorial department performed a study on psychological traumas of several generations of victims. The program 'Live Memory' is an oral history programme to collect data from witnesses. There is also a programme to create an inventory of places and objects which relate with the difficult history. A program 'Places of Imprisonment and Deportations' also records personal memories through interviews and collects diaries and photographs. A programme 'Signs, Symbols and Monuments of Memory' proactively commissions production of various works of art and plaques to mark places and events.

<sup>34</sup> See the website: [genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/562/c/](http://genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/562/c/) (18 June 2012)

goal of the Museum of Genocide Victims is to be 'an academic museum', which presents 'only facts' and does not appeal to emotions excessively. The informant stressed that the MGCV consciously seeks to represent an alternative to the ironic and entertaining Grūtas Park of Soviet Statues.<sup>35</sup> The objective and neutral production of historical knowledge is thus an explicit aim of the MGCV. It can be hypothesised that the use of the term 'memory' is a residual influence of the active participation of the deportees' and resistance communities in the museum's work.

The museum staff emphasised that the Museum of Genocide Victims accumulated its collection relating to the deportations almost exclusively through donations from private individuals.<sup>36</sup> Lacking the funding necessary for pro-active collecting, the museum had little control over the themes and types of objects which came to form its material core. The narrow range of artefacts that landed in the museum's storage rooms had imposed restrictions on the assembling of exhibitions. For example, photographs that feature prominently in the exhibitions constitute the biggest proportion of donated objects. However, because of the ban on deportees and prisoners to keep photographic equipment or photographs, the majority of the photographs are dated after 1953 and photographs from the first wave of deportations in 1941 are a great rarity. Artefacts and original documents are not numerous. The Museum itself calls the artefacts 'relics' (*relikvijos*), which has the same religious connotation in Lithuanian as in English.

In 1997 the Centre for Genocide Research developed a conceptual outline of the exhibition displays.<sup>37</sup> This planning stage included not only professional historians and museum workers, but also former deportees: the Museum of Genocide Victims arranged consultations and informed the Union about its work in progress. Some of the ideas suggested by deportees were implemented; for example, exhibition of portraits of deportees near the prison cells in which they were kept. It was decided to focus on the period 1940–1990, although Lithuanians were deported by Russian tsarist authorities already in the nineteenth century.

It took about seven years for the Museum of Genocide Victims to install its exhibition displays (1999–2006), which were completed

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Vytautas, an employee of the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius (11 July 2011). The exact identity of all informants has been kept anonymous.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Rima, a curator at the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius (11 July 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Hence the rationale of the Museum of Genocide Victims predated the House of Terror in Budapest (est. 2002).

after Lithuania joined the EU and saw quick economic growth. Three halls dedicated to the deportations were the last ones to be opened to visitors in 2006. The website presentation of the exhibition 'Inhabitants of Lithuania in the Gulag in 1944–1956' does not make any claims to present a particular type of knowledge, nor does it refer to a 'memorial' mission. In a rather positivist and humble way, the website text states that the 'exhibited historical-documentary materials' will 'reveal the scale and motives of repressions, the incredibly difficult conditions of the prisoners' work and everyday life, and introduce the Soviet penal system'. Besides, the text emphasises the universal significance of the experience of deportees from Lithuania: 'It is also a story about the people and their endless efforts not to give up in the face of crushing reality and not to lose their human dignity, faith and hope'.<sup>38</sup> The description of the next exposition 'Deportations: 1944 – 1953' categorises deportees not in ethnic terms, but in other social categories, such as 'family', 'elderly', 'children', 'the newborn' and 'ill people'.<sup>39</sup>

The third hall is dedicated to the exhibition 'Life continues', the description of which contains some references to ethnic group identities. It describes prisoners and deportees as 'the Lithuanians' and specifies that in trying to survive, prisoners and deportees tried to 'raise children, keep their customs, language, historical conscience and to be guided by Christian values in their everyday life'.<sup>40</sup> It seems that starting in the 2000s, the Museum of Genocide Victims adopted a more universalising approach to deportations: the accompanying texts emphasise the trauma of forced displacement, the breaking up of families and the terror of death.<sup>41</sup> A final note testifies to a recent broadening of the approach to deportations, as themes of 'normal' everyday life have been introduced to the agenda of the Museum. For example, in relation to Eurobasket 2011, the Museum organised a temporary exhibition about basketball in the deportations. This choice is less surprising than one might think, because basketball has traditionally occupied a strong position as a social expression of Lithuanian nationalism.

<sup>38</sup> Text from the website: [genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/146/a/](http://genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/146/a/).

<sup>39</sup> See the website: [genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/179/a/](http://genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/179/a/).

<sup>40</sup> See the website: [genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/180/a/](http://genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/180/a/).

<sup>41</sup> A good example is a travelling poster exhibition 'Under the Foreign Skies', produced by the Museum of Genocide and exhibited at the European Parliament, Brussels, 20–24 June 2011. Previous travelling exhibitions included 'The Chronicles of Violence: Lithuania in 1939–1941' to commemorate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of deportations. This exhibition was shown in Brussels, Lithuanian towns, St. Petersburg, Berlin and Chicago in 2006–2011.

The Museum of Genocide Victims assembled its exhibitions about deportations by using several types of knowledge production. First, although the narratives of the exhibitions aim to rely only on the facts established by academic history, the architectural design of the exhibitions settings seeks to appeal to the emotions. The exhibition design is sleek and stylish, but also rather traditional: objects are placed in glass stands, alongside the walls. The space is dominated by enlarged photographic prints and smaller photographs. Although there are quite a few objects exhibited, it is the printed images which dominate the displays. The museum is clearly a place to study and read, and in this way a visitor's experience is different from that of the dark and cramped yurt, where the objects are silent. The Museum of Genocide Victims, finally, seeks to provide the visitor with a more full-fledged story about the deportations, but its departure point is rather texts produced by professional historians, and not a purposive collecting of objects.<sup>42</sup>

### Deportations at the Ninth Fort Museum

The last case study concerns the largest exhibition dedicated to the deportations of Lithuania's inhabitants, which is located at the Museum of Occupations at the Ninth Fort in Kaunas. The Ninth Fort has a ghastly history associated with the killings of Kaunas Jews in 1941, the mass murder which marked the beginning of the Holocaust in Lithuania. After the Second World War, the Ninth Fort was incorporated by Soviet cultural policy to commemorate victory against the Nazis. The Fort's territory was excavated by forensic archaeologists, and a museum was established in 1958. To house the museum exhibition a rather spectacular modernist pavilion was erected in 1984. Designed by the famous modernist architects Vytautas Vičius and Gediminas Baravykas, this building still looks strikingly original in 2011, though it needs repairs. From the outside, the museum resembles a giant sculpture cast in grey concrete. Inside, similar to Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Ninth Fort New Museum building works as a monumental space which emotionally structures the visitor's walk: one can walk around, through and even on the top of the building. In addition to the new museum building an imposing monument

<sup>42</sup> The Museum of Genocide Victims has an extensive educational program for children and youth that include four themes related to deportations ('The geography of deportations and imprisonment in the Soviet Union', 'Soviet prisons, camps and deportation: their distinctive features', 'Lithuanian priests in Soviet camps and deportation', 'Children in deportation'). In addition, six documentary films are available for screening on demand.

was erected on the side of the mass graves. The whole complex was meant to pay homage to the Soviet citizens who died during the Second World War: Soviet historiography did not distinguish Jews as a group that suffered the greatest losses and, obviously, the Soviet deportations were not mentioned at all. The Soviet museum of the Ninth Fort was created as a museum of the suffering and victory of the Soviet people.

In 1988–1992 the museum was reorganised and the new pavilion was renamed as the Museum of Occupations.<sup>43</sup> In 2011 the modern pavilion contained an exhibition about Lithuania's occupations: Soviet, Nazi and Soviet again. The Ninth Fort itself was used by the communists to house prisoners before deporting them and, consequently, Soviet deportations take up most of the displays. A display dedicated to the Holocaust is also included in this building, but a much larger and detailed displays about the fate of European, Lithuanian and particularly Kaunas's Jews were recently installed in the newly renovated halls of the Fort. The modernist building, therefore, seems to be mainly dedicated to the exhibition about Soviet deportations.

Upon entering the exhibition space of the Museum of Occupations the visitor is dazzled by deep colours of a backlit stained glass composition 'Undeclared Lithuania' by Kazys Morkūnas. The first hall resembles a modern stained glass church chapel and gives the impression of a religious space. Although the stained glass composition features realistic scenes of fighting and grieving, it comes across first of all as an abstract play of colours. Installed in 1984, this work of art carefully modified socialist realist dogmas and the prescribed content; namely, the suffering and heroic Soviet citizens. But since the portrayed figures did not bear any obvious attributes of communist iconography, they also survived de-Sovietisation and could be used as homage to the general suffering of Lithuania's inhabitants. In addition to this stained glass composition, the Museum of Occupations kept several other sculptures made by Soviet Lithuanian artists in the 1960s and 1980s.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Although well visited, the Museum of Occupations at the Ninth Fort has been little studied. For example, a recent comparative study of the museums of occupations in the Baltic States analysed the Grūtas park as a Lithuanian case, but did not mention the Ninth Fort. See Aro Velmet, 'Occupied Identities: National Narratives in Baltic Museums of Occupations', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 42, Nr. 2 (2011), pp. 189–211.

<sup>44</sup> These sculptures are done in a quite refined neo-classical style that is close to art deco style. For example, 'Pain' is a graceful white sculpture of a mourning woman that is twisted into an abstract shape by A. Vertulienė (1982) and 'Mother' by Gediminas Jokūbonis (1960) is a model of a large monument for the Pirčiupiai village, which was burned by the Nazis. These illustrations of pain are complemented with a sculpture dedicated to hope, 'The First Swallows' by Juozas Mikėnas (1960), a model of a larger monument that was originally commissioned to celebrate Soviet space exploration.

At a later stage, more works of art were added: a series of paintings on the theme of laments by Virginijus Kašinskas (1989) and sculptures dedicated to deportees by Tamara Janova.

The Museum of Occupations places a much stronger emphasis on emotional affect than the Museum of Genocide Victims. Just like in the Museum of Genocide Victims, the building itself dramatises the visitor's experience from the inside and outside. The difference is that the MGV building influences emotions through its history, whereas the building of the Museum of Occupations speaks to aesthetical perception. The exhibitions of the Museum of Occupations also combine academic study with an appeal to the emotions. Verbal and visual information and objects are displayed in a rather old-fashioned way in the stands and drawers which are aligned with the walls and protected by glass. The exhibition stands are dominated by labelled photographs and short texts that give some historical background in Lithuanian and (incorrect) English. These displays are meant to be studied and are punctuated with paintings of laments and poetic quotes (without identifying the source), which suggest the intent to produce an emotional effect on the visitor. Unlike the yurt, which used enlarged reproductions of amateur deportee drawings, the Museum of Occupations is opulently decorated with works by professional artists.<sup>45</sup>

A visit to the Museum of Occupations, quite typical of museums about the second half of the twentieth century in the Baltic States, can be compared to reading an album of photographs rather than a history book. Hundreds of photographs are labelled with names and places, but explicit narratives are lacking. There is no catalogue for sale, nor are any printed sheets with narratives available. A rudimentary narrative can be reconstructed from the captions of the exhibition stands, the chronology and themes of which suggest that the key story is the political history of Lithuania's sovereignty. The first stand, 'The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Annexation of Lithuania 1940–1941', is dedicated to the Soviet occupation and the first killings and deportations conducted by the NKVD. This is followed by the Nazi occupation and the extermination of Lithuania's Jews. The second Soviet occupation opens a large section, 'Soviet Terror and Deportations', which occupies about half of the entire exhibition space. In this way, the Museum identifies foreign occupations with population losses through executions and deportations.

<sup>45</sup> The yurt and the train wagon featured drawings by Martinaitis, who was deported to the Laptev Sea area. These drawings were used to illustrate several publications produced by the Laptev Society.

The Museum website states that the exhibitions seek to 'familiarise' visitors with the 'pain, losses and bereavement brought to Lithuania by Nazi and Soviet occupations'. The exhibition about deportations is described carefully not to limit the victims to ethnic Lithuanians, but refers to them as 'Lithuania's inhabitants' and explicitly states that 'not only Lithuanians', but also Poles and Jews 'and people of other ethnicities' were deported. The website says that deportations constituted a 'physical and spiritual genocide that the Soviet government performed on Lithuania's inhabitants'.<sup>46</sup> However, this information is absent from the exhibition halls. Jewish names abound throughout the exhibition, but there is no special section for Jews or any of Lithuania's other ethnic minorities (a short text does mention that non-Lithuanian ethnic groups like Jews and Poles were also deported from Lithuania).

The most explicit story of deportations on display is the story of the Lithuanian elites. Just like in the yurt which was analysed earlier, there is a lack of a wider context concerning forced population displacements and terror. Even the geography of deportations is not used as a possible structuring theme. Instead, the focus is on several groups which are clearly perceived as crucial to Lithuanian sovereignty: government members, army officers, priests and journalists, are each allocated separate stands. The only more or less comprehensive story of an individual deportee concerns Konstantinas Šakenis (1881–1959) who was the Minister of Education of the Lithuanian republic and later a political prisoner. Resistance is another theme which is implicitly addressed by the selection of areas of focus, such as the uprisings of the imprisoned Lithuanian army officers in Norilsk and Vorkuta camps in 1953. In this way, the Museum of Occupations seems to tap into the widely used argument that 'the very best of Lithuania were deported'.<sup>47</sup>

As is often the case, the objects on display could potentially tell a lot of different stories. In addition to photographs, the exhibition stands contain a wide variety of objects which were either donated by survivors or excavated by archaeologists. Some objects bear a very obvious relation to the story of deportation as one of enduring inhumane hardships: worn clothes, rusted mugs, spoons made from flattened aluminium and pages from letters and diaries. Other objects hint at cultural practices that deportees and prisoners managed to engage in even under such hardships: religious items, such as crucifixes and bibles, decorative items, such as painted

<sup>46</sup> See the website: [gfortomuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/](http://gfortomuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/).

<sup>47</sup> Conversation with 'Mission Siberia' participant, Vilnius (12 July 2011).

and carved boxes, and artefacts made by the deportees themselves, most often embroidery, but also drawings and even sports shirts. These objects of everyday life were described on the museum website as expressions of 'love and loyalty to the motherland'. These objects, according to the description, were the product of ingenious creativity: 'rosaries were made from bread crumbs or plant seeds, crosses were made from toothbrushes, combs, and parts of aluminium spoons'.<sup>48</sup>

However, the meaning of the great many other objects on display, such as music instruments, chess sets, artfully bounded books, mineral collections, reading glasses, pens, even colourful and flashy ties, remains obscure. One display shows a pretty porcelain plate, used in the deportation settlement and brought back home by a political prisoner. It remains unclear, however, what were the reasons for the apparently extreme differences in the standards of living for deportees and political prisoners. It is also unclear if ornate objects, self-made or just preserved, were typical or exceptional. For example, a set of reindeer fur boots on display look new and hardly worn at all. Here I recalled that one deportee told me that at extremely low temperatures reindeer boots were useless as they quickly fell apart.<sup>49</sup> Due to this shortage of verbal narratives that could embed the rich variety of objects into stories and attribute them to a particular world, the visitor is left to herself to sort out the multiple boundaries that these objects inhabit.

### Exhibitions of Deportations as Gifts

New museums were established and new exhibition displays installed as ways to make public statements about the importance of deportations in the history of Lithuania's statehood. However, in the context of repeated economic declines (hyperinflation in 1990–1993, the economic crisis in Russia in 1998 and the world economic recession that started in 2008) the state had little to offer in terms of resources to these institutions. These museums, as a rule, were very small. Although located in large buildings, like the Museum of Genocide Victims and the Ninth Fort, they employed surprisingly few museum workers, often one employee per department. Hardly any funding was allocated for expeditions to study labour and concentration camps and deportee settlements in the Russian North and Far East. The collecting of

<sup>48</sup> See the website: [9fortomuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/](http://9fortomuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/).

<sup>49</sup> Conversation with a guide to the yurt at the Open Air Museum, Rumsiškės (17 July 2011).



material objects therefore relied heavily on donations, which pre-determined a rather patchy and fragmented way of telling the story.

An interesting twist is the recurring theme of Catholic Christianity, often embedded in the narrative of political statehood. This was due in part to the role that Catholic priests played in the elitist account of the political history of repressions and resistance. Furthermore, it has been traditional in Western culture to depict modern suffering through the forms and iconography of Christian tradition. However, the most important factor may have been the influence of the UPPD, a public organisation and later a political party, the members of which actively participated in the formation of the museums' collections and exhibitions. Indeed, the UPPD regulations proclaim the importance of the Christian faith in their activities.

Explicit narratives are scarce in the analysed museums. The most accessible are those truncated stories that can be reconstructed from the titles of exhibition displays. The titles of the exhibitions of the Ninth Fort and the Museum of Genocide Victims place the heaviest emphasis on the political narrative of the sovereignty of the Lithuanian state. First and foremost, it is the chronological structure of Lithuania's political statehood that is used to structure the exhibitions: the first and second Soviet occupation (1940/1944) and deportations (1940/1944–1956). The armed resistance to the communist regime in Lithuania was either spatially integrated in the displays about the deportations (The Ninth Fort) or situated in separate halls (the Museum of Genocide).

Secondly, the fate of Lithuanian military, government and cultural elites is represented prominently. As a rule, the deportations are narrated as a unique event: little space is dedicated to the contextual history of the concentration and labour camps, the forced population displacements, or even to the fate of the neighbouring Latvian, Estonian and Polish nations. The story of deportations tends to overlook the ethnic dimension of deported groups or to embrace them under the broader category of 'Lithuania's inhabitants' or 'Lithuanian citizens'. For instance, no separate space is dedicated to depict the particular stories of deported Jews, Roma or Russian peoples. True, a discerning visitor can read the displays along ethnic lines: many photograph labels bear the Jewish names of persons depicted. Finally, some life stories of deported families or individuals, usually of the Lithuanian elite, are sometimes exhibited, but the stories of individuals never dominate displays.

A third interesting aspect of exhibitions about deportations is their material dimension. Most of the displayed objects are not

easy to read: it is difficult to see how their often humble appearance relates to the terrifying stories of suffering and death. Most objects relate to basic functions, such as eating, working or keeping warm. Other objects were served as decoration. The memoir literature of survivors in concentration and labour camps, such as Primo Levi, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn and Balys Sruoga, emphasised the importance of the most mundane and humble things for a prisoner. Spoons, mugs, an extra piece of cloth were the most prized and often self-made possessions, which had high use and exchange value and on which the survival of a prisoner could depend. Perhaps for this reason so many deportees and political prisoners brought back with them rusty mugs or scratched aluminium spoons.

However, the power of these objects to tell a story is not always mobilised. The Ninth Fort, for example, displays small piles of combs, spoons and glasses. This manner of sorting related objects into piles is similar to that used in the Nazi death camps Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, but not at all clear that such objects were actually sorted in this manner at Soviet concentration and labour camps. Piled up together in this manner, the individual objects on display fail to communicate their unique value, which was so precious for each deportee. Their special role in preserving the prisoner's or deportee's life thus remains untold.

Is the lack of a clear articulation of the experience of diverse ethnic groups and social classes, the members of which were deported from Lithuania, a sign of ethno-nationalist hegemonisation of the history of deportations and suffering? There is no straightforward answer to this question. The narrative of the elite groups that suffered deportations and/or engaged in anti-Soviet resistance is, obviously, a legitimate one in Lithuanian historiography and public discourses. However, it would be premature to interpret the analysed museum displays as a hegemonic account of the history of Lithuania in the 1940s–50s. One should not underestimate the provisional and incomplete nature of the analysed displays. As mentioned earlier, there was surprisingly little comprehensive research done at the sites of deportations. The objects that are used by museum workers to tell the story were most often donated by the survivors themselves. Given that all of the museums in consideration are still evolving, and that they often modify their exhibitions in response to public debates, it is difficult to establish which issues have been actively and consciously excluded from the displays.

Indeed, a more fruitful way to understand the fragmented narratives of the displays is by turning to the explanation of museum-building

as a gift-giving. It can certainly be assumed that the museum workers have some liberty to tell the story according to their own understanding of history in relation to ethnic and social groups. However, donors and survivors were also involved in the formation of the exhibitions, often questioned and sometimes actively contested museum workers' choices of objects from the point of view of authenticity.<sup>30</sup> Some groups of survivors from particular social circles and particular geographical areas were more active than others in donating objects. Consequently, some stories became more visible than others in the museum displays. For instance, most widely presented are the deportees from the Laptev Sea area – a region characterised by some of the harshest conditions and the highest death rates. However, even the Laptev Sea area consisted of many islands and labour camps, but Trofimovsk and Tit Ary are the ones mainly represented in the museums. Other areas which occupy large spaces in the museum exhibitions are Norilsk, to which Lithuanian military officers were deported, and Krasnoyarsk. The most active communities of survivors literally assembled the history of Lithuania as their own history, their present and their future.

Furthermore, it is important to place the museums dedicated to the deportations in the wider context of cultural sector. Indeed, the stories and objects of deportees remain outside, or at best, on the margins of established cultural institutions in Lithuania. Established heritage professionals show little interest in the history of victims. The eye-wateringly low entry salaries of museum workers (about 400 Euro net per month in 2011) contribute to high staff volatility. This seriously jeopardises the work of museums, as it takes more than a year for a new curator to become familiar with the existing collection and to start meaningful work. By that point, however, most staff tend to leave for better paid jobs.<sup>31</sup> The stories of suffering, to be sure, are part of legitimate official discourse: however, this is most often little more than lip-service, confined to public speeches and red or black marks on the calendar. Survivors continue to survive by taking care of themselves: the work of museums is under-funded and relies heavily on volunteer labour or unpaid work after hours by scarce museum staff. All these aspects contribute to the often fragmented, amateurish and inconsistent displays. The exhibitions undoubtedly stand as impressive monuments to the power of the survivor communities. However, a more comprehensive

<sup>30</sup> Conversation with a museum worker at the Resistance and Deportations Department, Kaunas City Museum, Kaunas (10 July 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Vytautas, an employee at the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius (12 July 2011).

assembling of the painful Lithuanian past needs entrepreneurs, economic investment and a strong organisational framework to be capable of telling more diverse and fully-fledged stories about the people who were displaced, suffered, died and survived.

## Conclusion

Knowledge production involves processes of assembling and representing. Things need to be assembled in order to produce facts. These material assemblages are transformed into representations by accompanying narratives and other scripts. Both assembling and representing entail selections. It is certainly important to explore how selections were made: which things were invited to take part in the story and which narratives were articulated to give a sense of belonging. But how can a social historian studying such memory practices tell whether an intentional selection has taken place? The study of public knowledge regimes is therefore a minefield of unknowns: the historian depends on great many discourses in order to evaluate the work of representation. It is futile to try to arrive at any closure in this kind of historical analysis: assembling and representing are ongoing processes in the public and private spheres.

That said, museums provide important material settings for stabilising knowledge about the past through material objects and scripted narratives. It is important to note that the organisation of a museum exhibition is a highly complex process: there is no simple and straightforward translation of a verbal historical narrative into a material assemblage. Museum exhibition is a different way of articulating and stabilizing knowledge than an essay published in a newspaper. Museum exhibitions are much more costly, materially heterogeneous and demand an ongoing collaboration between different institutional, individual and corporate actors.

Claims that the key legitimate Lithuanian nationalist discourses stress national suffering under Soviet rule as the foundational collective experience are quite right in relation to programmes issued by the Lithuanian government, parliamentary speeches, and great many declarations. However, this official rhetoric was not effortlessly translated into a material homage to the victims of totalitarian regimes. I doubt if these legitimate discourses on national suffering have become hegemonic in the Lithuanian museum sector. Indeed, since 1990 the biggest state investments in culture were channelled into projects relating to the more distant past; particularly,

the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For example, the government spent more than 100 million Euros to build the Palace of Sovereigns in Vilnius. The largest private donation to culture so far entailed the building of a Modern Art Centre in the capital. Neither public nor private money, however, were directed to build a flagship monument to the victims of Soviet terror. Even the first major novel about Soviet deportations of Lithuanians was written not by a native Lithuanian writer, but by the American novelist Ruta Sepetys (*Between Shades of Grey*, 2011). This, I suggest, leads us to ask a lot of questions about the role and status of 'hegemonic ethno-nationalist narratives' in the broad fields of Lithuanian cultural policy and the cultural sector.

My point is methodological as well as theoretical: the mere existence of a particular museum display is a proof of neither an underlying consensus, nor a governmental strategy. Narratives about the difficult past, such as Soviet deportations, articulated in state museums, can be understood as a legitimate story of the events. However, it is a methodological mistake to automatically infer the existence of a consensus view on the status of these narratives among workers at the museum in question, the public cultural sector or governmental agencies. A closer look into a wider variety of sources would reveal that the narratives often reflect only the story propagated by one particular group, for example, the museum workers or just some of these workers, while other museum employees might hold quite different views.

The reasons why these and not other narratives happen to be articulated in a given museum can only be found in specific history of that museum, and particularly in its resource base and organisation. With respect to the construction of museum exhibitions, the term 'memory' is often used to justify the work of volunteers and non-specialists within the framework of the formal organisation of the museum. The task of a researcher into this process is to elucidate the many actors and rationales of 'collective memory work' and to tackle the highly messy and complex mechanisms of production.

Aro Velmet

## Breaking the Silences? Contradiction and Consistency in Representing Victimhood in Baltic Museums of Occupations

Upon entering the small, transparent building of the Museum of Occupations on the hill of Toompea in Tallinn, Estonia, the visitor is greeted by two towering locomotives in the middle of the room, one bearing a swastika, the other, a hammer-and-sickle. Situated in a room lined with a seemingly endless array of modest, worn-out suitcases, the locomotives drive home the central focus of the exposition – the forced deportations which pitted the humble Estonian population with their hurriedly packed suitcases against the Nazi and Soviet terror machines. In the Museum of Latvian Occupations in Riga, a similar framing device is used by lining the main exposition hall with excerpts from Latvian poetry written in Siberian exile. In Lithuania, the state-funded Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius is housed in the former KGB headquarters while the commercial Grūtas Park in Druskininkai is surrounded by a calm forest with mock guard towers and barbed-wire fences.

The museums of occupations in the three Baltics states underscore a point repeatedly made by scholars over the past decades: the predominant national narratives in the three countries are based on stories of collective tragedy in the form of forced deportations to the Soviet Gulag (Budryte 2004, 2005; Skultans 1996). Such stories are important in fostering collective commemoration of tragic events as well as in helping to create a sense of unity and stability, but they can just as well foster antagonism and create cleavages of historical memory by dividing the world into a Manichean opposition of 'oppressors' and 'victims', by sacralizing one perspective at the expense of others, and overlooking important historical details, sacrificing historical accuracy for social unity. However, as the mass riots on the streets of Tallinn following the removal of a Soviet-era memorial to the victory in World War II have all too clearly shown, attempts at institutionalizing a single narrative in a society with a plurality of emotionally affective

narratives of the past is ultimately detrimental to both historical accuracy and social cohesion (Kattago 2009; Smith 2008).

This chapter looks at how four museums of occupation in the three Baltic States deal with writing the recent history of the Baltics. These museums of occupations – defined as museums dealing explicitly with the history of the recent past from the perspective of a national experience of foreign rule – are particularly important loci of investigation. They are academic institutions of critical inquiry, charged with a scholarly investigation of the past, and discursive establishments, conduits of power, transmitting and shaping narratives of national identity through their scholarly and political authority. Museum expositions, particularly those dedicated to such high profile and politically charged issues as occupations, form a part of the ‘imagined community’ of a nation-state (Anderson 1991, pp. 4–6). There, history is collected, systematized and transformed into a narrative that can animate a nation and mould the shape of civil society. Because of this dual role of scholarship and nation-building, we must investigate the narratives these museums convey to determine which stories are privileged, which are contested or underplayed, and which are completely ignored.

Of particular interest to us are the points of contradiction and consistency. The four museums in question share a commitment to portraying the history of a nation under duress, but they diverge in their funding schemes, scholarly aims, size, and strategies of representation. While the Estonian and Latvian museums are, in spite of their architectural dynamism, in the final account still scholarly and reserved, the Museum of Genocide Victims capitalizes on the powerful history of its building, and Grūtas Park straddles the difficult line between a museum and a theme park. All of the museums in question construct narratives of ‘collective victimhood’ around the Soviet deportations. As a result, deeper complexities of the occupations period, such as the role of native collaborators in perpetuating the Soviet regime, or the impact of the Holocaust on pre-war minorities in the Baltics, are often left unexplored. However, curatorial choices, geographical location, the politics of space and experience, among others, shape these narratives in ways that sometimes reinforce, but often complicate the constructions of ethnicity and nationalism as presented in the expositions. Thus, the politics of representation in museums such as the Museum of Latvian Occupations or Grūtas Park also suggest ways in which the hegemonic narrative of national trauma can be adapted to co-exist with other accounts of the recent past, pointing towards a more pluralist accounting of the past required of post-modern, multicultural states.

## The Museum of Occupations in Estonia

Next to a majestic neo-Gothic cathedral and the remains of a 700-year-old city wall, and with the towers of Tallinn's Old City looming in the background, the Estonian Museum of Occupations looks rather small, almost tiny. It is one of two buildings in Estonia constructed explicitly as a museum – the other being the multi-million dollar Estonian National Art Museum, a giant limestone-and-steel complex constructed amidst intense public debate next to the Presidential palace and the historic Catherine's Valley Park. The Museum of Occupations has more modest origins. It was established in 1998 by Olga Kistler, an Estonian expatriate who emigrated to the United States during the Second World War. In collaboration with Tunne Kelam, then Vice Speaker of the Parliament and Heiki Ahonen, a former political prisoner and historian, she decided to establish a foundation for the creation of a 'museum of contemporary history' with a focus on the recent occupations.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of the museum is to 'document the catastrophes and cataclysms, which took place during the last fifty years and to find detailed proof about the past based on facts and analysis [...] [It is] interested in the life of Estonians, and also of Russians, Germans, Jews, Swedes and other minorities under the totalitarian regime of the second half of the XX century. [...] [It] must prevent the dreadful offences from being forgotten'.<sup>2</sup> The museum's day-to-day activities are run by Heiki Ahonen, its executive director since the very beginning, while the Kistler-Ritso Foundation keeps an eye on the museum's long-term objectives.<sup>3</sup>

Of the four museums of occupation, the Estonian institution is by far the smallest. It welcomes around 25 000 visitors yearly, one fourth of the number at the Latvian museum and a seventh of the number at Grūtas Park. Yet Estonia welcomes almost twice as many tourists per year than either of the other Baltic States.<sup>4</sup> The museum employs seven people, four of them full-time. Though the museum operates as a private

<sup>1</sup> Heiki Ahonen (director of the Estonian Museum of Occupation), interview with the author, July 2009, Estonian Museum of Occupation.

<sup>2</sup> The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation, *Goals and Objectives*, Tallinn, <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/english/index.html>. Accessed on 11/15/09.

<sup>3</sup> Ahonen, interview with the author.

<sup>4</sup> Ivetta Druva Druvaskalne, & Agita Slara, 'Tourism Challenges in the Baltic States Since EU Enlargement' (European Regional Science Association Conference Paper, 2006), <http://ideas.repec.org/p/wiwr/wiwr52/ersa06p121.html>. Accessed on 11/15/09.



non-profit, about two thirds of its operating budget is financed by grants from the Ministry of Culture, with the rest coming from ticket sales.<sup>5</sup> The size of the government grant was about \$250 000 in FY 2009, making it the smallest enterprise in terms of funding as well.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the museum also has smaller ambitions than its counterparts. There is no big outreach program, no elaborate educational activities and no army of trained tour guides. Instead, the museum focuses on expanding its complex exhibition consisting of audio-visual material and physical artefacts, continuing a research program on the history of the Estonian Communist Party (ECP) and publishing general overviews of Estonian history for foreign visitors.

The ground floor houses the main exhibition of the museum, with an afterthought-like supplement of Soviet era sculptures and posters in the basement. The exhibition space consists of a single giant room that can also function as a lecture hall and a cafeteria, with exhibition cases serving as the only lines of demarcation. The physical centrepiece of the museum is a massive mock-up of two trains forming a gateway into the back half of the museum, one bearing the Nazi swastika, the other the Soviet red star. The intellectual centrepiece, though less grandiose visually, is equally epic in scope: projected onto the back wall, seven documentary films with a total length of four hours narrate the past 70 years of Estonian history. Period artefacts, carefully chosen to symbolize the mentalities, everyday practices and overall atmosphere of various stages of the Nazi and Soviet occupations surround the video screens, adding a tangible component to the exhibition. Personal testimony, provided in the form of video interviews and artefacts of individual suffering complement the predominantly political narrative of the main exhibition.

The other major objective of the museum is research. Work on the history of the ECP has resulted in the three major monographs, as well as a number of academic articles, conference presentations and other publications. However, only one major work has been translated into English and Russian: a 2004 collection of articles on the history of the occupations of Estonia.<sup>7</sup> Thus, most publications are inaccessible to visitors not fluent

<sup>5</sup> Ahonen, interview with the author.

<sup>6</sup> Eesti Vabariigi Kultuuriministeerium, *Kultuuriministeeriumi valitsemisala Eelarve 2009*, 08/03/09, [http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/enle/KUM\\_2009\\_eelarve\\_scis\\_03\\_08\\_2009.xls](http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/enle/KUM_2009_eelarve_scis_03_08_2009.xls). Accessed on 11/15/09

<sup>7</sup> The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation. *Teadustegevuse Põhisuunad ja Prioriteetid* <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/tegevus/tegevus.html>. Accessed on 12/01/09.

in Estonian, who make up half of the museum's audience.<sup>8</sup> The analysis presented here will focus on the large selection of English and Russian language booklets and introductory texts available at the museum store, including the collection of articles on the Soviet occupation, a government publication called *The White Book* (2005) on the 'losses inflicted on the Estonian nation by occupation regimes' and a number of colourful introductions to Estonian history by historian and former prime minister Mart Laar.<sup>9</sup>

### The Museum of Latvian Occupations

Four hundred kilometres to the south, the Museum of Latvian Occupations is in some ways the mirror image of the small, transparent and dynamic Estonian museum. The two institutions are similar in terms of their origin and funding: the Latvian museum was also founded by an expatriate, Pauls Lazda, and one fourth of its budget comes from government grants. But in other aspects the Latvian museum stands in striking contrast to its Estonian counterpart. It is located in a dark, reinforced concrete edifice, originally built as the Latvian Red Riflemen museum in 1970.<sup>10</sup> Employing 42 people, half of them fulltime, the museum serves over 100,000 visitors per year.<sup>11</sup> About two thirds of the visitors are tourists or non-resident Latvians, followed by schoolchildren and students as well as those with personal experience of the period.<sup>12</sup> The goal of the museum is summed up in three words: 'Show, Remind and Remember'.<sup>13</sup> Though not formally defined, the political goal of the museum is at least as important. The museum, according to its chief administrators, tries to subvert the deliberate or accidental misinformation that dominates nationalist Russian discourses about the occupations of Latvia.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ahonen, interview with the author.

<sup>9</sup> The publications include titles like *The Forgotten War: Armed Resistance Movement in Estonia 1944–1956* and *Birds-Eye View of Estonian History* (all Grenader: Tallinn, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Gundega Michel (director of the Museum of the Occupations of Latvia), interview with the author, August 2009, Museum of the Occupations of Latvia.

<sup>11</sup> Museum of the Occupations of Latvia, *Visitors*, [http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=142](http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=142). Accessed on 12/01/09.

<sup>12</sup> Michel, interview with the author.

<sup>13</sup> Museum of the Occupations of Latvia, *Museum Brochure, English*.

<sup>14</sup> Michel, interview with the author and Valters Nollendorfs (Director of External Relations of the Museum of the Occupations of Latvia), interview with the author, August 2009, Museum of the Occupations of Latvia.

These objectives are transformed into reality in the main exhibition hall, on the windowless upper floor, where tall red pillars divide the exhibition area into sections detailing various aspects of the occupations. The exhibition presents two narratives, color-coded and spatially separate: The main narrative recounts the political, social and cultural aspects of 20th century occupations in chronological sections. This chronological narrative crosses with a secondary narrative focussed on Latvian experiences in the Soviet Gulag. Here, the collective memory of deportation is illustrated through the life stories of eight deportees and a selection of tools, memorabilia, diaries and other personal items recovered from Siberia. Since the museum was built piece-meal, earlier sections of the exhibition are more comprehensive and larger in size, creating an unintentional focus on earlier periods of occupation and the deportations.

The Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 frames the primary narrative of the exhibition. The tour starts with an illustrated history of its signing and ends with the Soviet Union's admission in 1989 of the existence of its secret protocols that allowed for the occupation of the Baltics. The story of the restoration of Latvia's independence is presented as a coda, in a separate room of the museum. In spite of the on-going economic crisis, the museum is still planning to construct a new wing to the existing building, which would allow the curators to accommodate a larger, better-planned exhibition. The new exhibition is designed to be multifocal, more thematic, and with more coverage of the socio-cultural aspects of the occupation, as the curators themselves admit that the current focus is 'too political'.<sup>15</sup> The extensive collection of artefacts accumulated over the years now provides the curators with more options than they had before. As a result, the new exhibition will be more attentive to issues of balance and composition, while the current exhibition was constructed with expediency and availability of space in mind.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the museum features an extensive set of publications in Latvian, English, Russian, French, and even Estonian and Lithuanian. The selection includes a large and colourful guide to the museum and translations of major research publications.<sup>17</sup> Next to thick overviews of the entire occupation period and collections of academic articles, one can easily find translated versions of novels written by former dissidents or case

<sup>15</sup> Ieva Gundare (curator), interview with the author, August 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Valters Nollendorfs, interview with the author.

<sup>17</sup> Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, *Publications*, [http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=28](http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=28). Accessed on 12/01/09.

studies of, for example, the Nazi/Soviet disinformation campaign portraying the Holocaust in Eastern Europe as a spontaneous upsurge of anti-Semitism (Ezergailis 2005). Like Estonian publications at the Estonian museum, books in Latvian dominate the bookstore, though the larger variety of publications and languages creates the impression of a greater focus on outreach.

### The Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius

The irony of using the building of the Red Riflemen's Museum to highlight the crimes of communism in Latvia is overshadowed by the stark message conveyed in Lithuania, by the decision to turn the former headquarters of the KGB in Vilnius into a commemorative museum highlighting its crimes. The building, originally built to serve as a courthouse, housed the Lithuanian NKVD in 1940–41, the German Gestapo in 1941–44 and the KGB in 1944–1991.

Established by the order of the Lithuanian minister of culture and education in 1992, the museum's task is to 'to investigate the physical and spiritual genocide of Lithuanians carried out by the occupying regimes between 1939 and 1990'.<sup>18</sup> Although it is by no means evident from the museum's name or mission statement, the actual focus of the museum is on the human rights abuses committed specifically by the Soviet regime. The crimes committed during the German occupation were not addressed on any of the three floors of the museum at the time of the viewing.

The ground floor and the first floor of the building narrate the story of Soviet Lithuania in much the same way as the Museum of Latvian Occupations, focusing on the anti-Soviet resistance, the Gulag experience, the postwar activities of the KGB and the subsequent fight for freedom. By contrast, the basement exposition stands out as an example of an 'experiential museum', 'foregrounding aspects of visitor experiences and legitimating them' (Hein 2006, pp. 1–23). There, audiences are treated to an exposition of the pre-trial holding cells of the KGB, which, according to the curators, look 'the same as [they] did in August 1991, when the KGB vacated [them]'.<sup>19</sup> Two cells contain exhibitions; displaying the use of the prison during the 1960s and the persecution of Lithuanian Catholics, while the rest remain empty, with only small text plaques next to them describing their use and function in the past. The experience of walking through the run-down cells and the claustrophobic atmosphere which, according to the exposition,

<sup>18</sup> The Museum of Genocide Victims, <http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/>. Accessed on 9/19/11.

<sup>19</sup> Museum of Genocide Victims, <http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/380/2/>. Accessed on 9/19/11.

'hardly resembles the prison in which in the postwar period members of the anti-Soviet resistance were tortured'<sup>20</sup>, implying that the reality was even worse, provide a visceral experience similar to the one aimed at in many contemporary Holocaust museums.

### Grūtas Park

Less than a hundred kilometres away, near the old spa town of Druskininkai, lies a giant estate, surrounded by a rustic village, a golf course, a resort and last but not least, Grūtas Park. The institution, owned by mushroom tycoon Viliūmas Malinauskas, is centered around 90 Soviet-era sculptures, ranging from the standard exemplars of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, to heroes of Socialist Lithuania and obscure leaders of the local Communist Party. These statues make up the bulk of the outdoors exhibition (along with the reconstruction of a Gulag camp tower, a few pieces of artillery and a petting zoo), but equally important are the indoor exhibitions, located in two reconstructed examples of Soviet architecture. A 'typical' 1960s style cultural house gives an overview of Soviet social life, and a 'typical' Soviet art museum explains the intricacies of Soviet ideological propaganda through an exhibition of popular paintings in the socialist realist style. A number of 'attractions' amplify the sense of nostalgia and 'authenticity', or perhaps a consciously ironic pseudo-authenticity. A *kvass* machine with a distinctly 1970s look, a restaurant offering 'themed food' such as smoked herring with boiled potatoes, and a souvenir shop prominently dominate the intersection of the three 'main streets' of the park.<sup>21</sup> Visitors are welcome to purchase vodka in glasses with red stripes printed at 50, 100 and 200 gram marks along with toasts to Stalin, the Homeland and Communism. The children's playground and the petting zoo serve no thematic aim, and are there simply for the entertainment for the kids while the parents are seeing the exhibition.<sup>22</sup>

Grūtas Park thus focuses on providing simulated reality, entertainment and leisure. Characteristically, there is a complete absence of written material (the museum shop does not have a single book, not even an introductory overview of the park) and no educational program. Were it not for the serious and analytical exhibitions in the cultural house and the art museum, one could call the establishment a 'theme park' rather than a

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> *Kvass* is a popular drink in Russian and Eastern Europe, similar to root beer.

<sup>22</sup> Viliūmas Malinauskas (director of Grūtas Park), interview with the author, August 2009, Grūtas Park.

'museum' (Walsh 1992, pp. 97–104). Grūtas Park is privately run, and the sole instance of government involvement occurred when the founders of the museum acquired the statues at a public tender. Finally, in contrast to the amicable relations between the state, society and the other museums described above, Grūtas Park has come under harsh criticism from the Lithuanian government, intellectuals and part of the public for ostensibly mocking the grim realities and tragic history of the Lithuanian people.

### The Museums in Context: National Narratives and the Conflict of Memory

The Baltic museums of occupations aspire to establish national grand narratives. For instance, the Director of the Museum of Latvian Occupation has stated that a key goal of the museum is to show that 'as a people and a nation, Latvians have survived and now continue to rebuild and prosper in spite of many difficulties'.<sup>23</sup> The real question is rather what sort of national narratives do the museums construct, and how do seemingly innocuous factors such as aesthetic practices, narrative frameworks as well as financial and material constraints contribute to or disrupt these discourses? Are the resulting narratives supportive of overlapping identities, accepting of different cultural norms and values, or are they exclusive, polarizing or even hostile towards those constructed as the ontological Others?

These questions are particularly salient in post-soviet societies with long histories of violence and repression. As Omer Bartov (2000, pp. 137–38) has noted, 'victims produce enemies and enemies eventually make for more victims'. This does not mean that collective trauma should be ignored, but rather that commemorative practices should attempt to 'work through' trauma, to 'be able to distinguish between past and present [...] while realizing that one is living here and now with openings into the future' (LaCapra 2001). Such practices would involve both mourning and a critical practice that resists the temptation to blindly identify with the victim, to keep on reproducing the discourse of trauma in the present (LaCapra 2001, pp.24–30). These tensions are highlighted particularly by the use of personal testimonies in the representation of traumatic events, a practice that is both indispensable from the perspective of mourning and commemoration, but also highly problematic, because in the context of

<sup>23</sup> Gundega Michel, interview to Martin Evans (09/04/2006).

limited time and space, individual narratives often end up subsumed under the rubric of 'national tragedy' (Kushner 2001, pp. 92–93).

The results of collective victimizing can be easily seen in the Baltic context, where the mobilization of memory for political purposes by all major communities has contributed to continuing tensions between the ethnic majorities and minority populations. After the fall of the Soviet Union, all three Baltic States have made some progress towards constructing a civic identity that supports and integrates all of the ethnic groups inhabiting their respective countries, and it is noteworthy that violent ethnic conflict has not materialized in the Baltics like it has elsewhere. However, the divisions of memory between majority and minority groups are continuously politicized, and have led to political and social crises such as the Wars of Monuments in Estonia. In general, divisions of memory have prevented the Baltics from making major progress on the integration of minority populations, building inclusive civil societies, or fostering a deliberative democracy (Budryte 2005, pp. 34–35; Ehin & Berg 2009, pp. 1–15; Vetik 135–136; Tamm 118–120, 158–159). In such explosive environments, 'truth creating' institutions, such as museums, must pay particularly strong attention to avoiding the unnecessary exacerbation of conflict.

This is not to suggest that the narratives offered by the museums are identical to the hegemonic narratives of local ethnic majorities in the society at large or that they are in some way explicitly subject to state control. Indeed, one of the goals of this essay is to suggest why this is not the case, and to draw attention to how specific constraints that particular museums face can either support or undermine hegemonic narratives. One must take note of the inevitable limitations posed by the finite amount of material resources that have forced museums to choose certain ways of exhibition over others. For instance, it is very hard to represent minority cultures at the same level as majority cultures, since material objects relating to the dominant culture are almost always easier to obtain. Similarly, funding restrictions create concrete limits on what a museum can do, forcing curators to prioritize certain objectives (such as collecting artefacts) over others (such as educational outreach). In other cases, curators have chosen to consciously oppose exclusionary narratives, for instance through institutionalizing educational initiatives where children are encouraged to assume different roles (including deportees of different nationalities, Red Army and Nazi soldiers and so on). This essay thus suggests that even in the absence of direct state control, implicit discourses of gender, ethnicity, cultural status

and trauma shape the sorts of narratives that our museums represent, and produce stories that ultimately fit rather neatly under the rubric of 'collective victimhood'. At the same time, it also suggests that other considerations, while often weak and diluted, are also present, making the narratives in museums of occupations more complicated and contradictory than the hegemonic ethnonationalist narratives sometimes presented in political rhetoric.

The following analysis focuses on two models of representing difference: exclusion and subordination. Through exclusion, only subjects, events and practices that conform to the dominant discourse of national identity are allowed a place in the narrative. This practice clearly delineates who has the *right* to claim membership in a community and the grounds on which these claims can be made (Woodward 1997, p. 26). In the Baltic context, exclusionary practices are often used to create an impression of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity on the one hand, and to delineate a victim-oppressor binary, with the local ethnic in the victim role and the Soviet Union (often simply Russia) in the oppressor role. Subordination involves submitting intercultural relations to a power structure, where one party is portrayed as uniquely superior, positive, acceptable, and the other as inferior, negative, and deviant.<sup>24</sup> As we have already implied, such identities are inherently unstable, but these instabilities can be occluded, as well as deliberately or accidentally highlighted by particular practices and forms of representation. The following analysis must then involve a careful reading of the exhibitions and museum practices to see where such hierarchies are imposed and where they are subverted.

### Inclusion and Exclusion: 'All these weird subjects...'

Two types of exclusion are at play in the museums of occupation to varying degrees. First, exhibitions can exclude, downplay and ignore specific events or communities in order to homogenize the national narrative. Second, in selecting their thematic focus, museums inevitably privilege certain issues over others, marginalizing or completely excluding some social groups and historical events. A comparison of the four museums will allow us to

<sup>24</sup> This concept is central to Michel Foucault's analysis of power and representation, which has been adopted and elaborated by many scholars of cultural studies. A good starting point for a deeper discussion of representational politics can be found in Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power' in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 109-132.



discover and compare some of the differences in the choice of focus and depiction of specific events.

Depictions of the Holocaust in the Estonian and Latvian museums provide a lucid contrast in dealing with the first type of exclusion. It is an undisputed fact that Nazi Germany engaged in the mass extermination of Jews, Roma and other groups in the Baltics. Scholars similarly agree that most of actual extermination was conducted by locals. The death toll reached 200,000 in Lithuania, 60,000 in Latvia and around 10,000 in Estonia. These numbers included virtually all of the local Jewish population, plus significant numbers of Roma and Soviet prisoners of war. Often, once local extermination had been completed, additional Jewish and Roma prisoners were brought to Baltic concentration camps from other Nazi occupied territories as well as from Germany itself.<sup>25</sup>

The Latvian museum treats the Holocaust with due attention. It occupies a central place in the part of the exposition dedicated to the German occupation. Visitors can find data on the actual killings, look at examples of anti-Jewish propaganda, observe a discussion on later Soviet attempts to portray the Latvians as Nazi sympathizers, and finally read a summary of Latvian collaborators and the few Jewish survivors. The exhibition also discusses historiographical controversies, specifically related to Holocaust research during the Soviet period, during which 'victims of the Holocaust were conflated with 'peaceful Soviet citizens'<sup>26</sup>. In addition to the physical exposition, the Holocaust is covered in an abridged, 40-minute version of the audioguide and the bookstore, which offers an entire volume on the history of Latvian Jews (Gordon, 2001).

One might expect a similar treatment of the Holocaust in the Estonian Museum of Occupation. Although the Jewish population of Estonia was smaller, the thoroughness of the Nazi genocide was all the more apparent, as not a single Estonian Jew who was in the country in 1940 survived the German occupation (Hiio et al. 2006, pp. xviii–xix).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Michael MacQueen, 'The Context of Mass Destruction: Agents and Prerequisites of the Holocaust in Lithuania' in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 27–48 for an overview of the Holocaust in Lithuania; Nollendorfs, Valters and Uldis Neilburgs, *The Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia*, Museum of Latvian Occupations: Riga, 2006 for the same in Latvia and Estonian International Commission for Investigating Crimes Against Humanity, *Conclusions: 1941–1944*, [http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/pdf/conclusions\\_en\\_1941-1944.pdf](http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/pdf/conclusions_en_1941-1944.pdf). Accessed on 12/03/09 for the same in Estonia; Anton Weiss-Wendt, 'Why the Holocaust Does Not Matter to Estonians', *Journal of Baltic Studies* Vol. 39, No. 4 (2008), p. 476 for additional geographical data.

<sup>26</sup> Gundega Michel, interview with Martin Evans, 09/04/06.

But in reality, the Holocaust is almost completely absent in the physical exposition and completely marginal in the documentary focusing on the Nazi occupation. While the segment does include an eyewitness account describing the atrocities of the concentration camps, it is preceded by a lengthy meditation on the use of the term 'extermination camp' at Klooga. 'It has often been written that these were so-called 'extermination camps,' I would rather call them 'labor camps' – when the work day ended, then people were allowed to visit the local villages,' narrates a local farmer.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, the actual events of the Holocaust are briefly skimmed over at best. Museum publications ignore the event as well: with the exception of the International Commission Report, introductory texts neglect the Holocaust completely (Ahonen 2004). Former prime minister Mart Laar's 70-page overview of 'Estonia in World War II' covers the Holocaust literally in one paragraph on pages 23 and 25. Laar emphasizes 'several cases of sheltering and rescuing Jewish-origin citizens of Estonia from the Nazis,' noting only a few lines later, in a staggering feat of self-contradiction, that Jewish and Roma populations of Estonia were 'entirely exterminated' (Laar 2005, pp. 23–25).

Treatment of the Holocaust is similarly problematic at the Lithuanian Genocide Museum. The central feature of the exposition is the building itself, which has, in various times, housed the NKVD, the KGB, the Gestapo, and the SD (the Nazi Security Service).<sup>28</sup> Though this is acknowledged in the exhibition catalogue and the museum's website, the exhibition itself makes no reference to this, focusing instead on the Soviet occupations of 1939–1941 and 1944–1991. This omission is made more curious by the claims to universality expressed in the name and the mission statement of the museum. In international discourse, the term 'genocide' is unequivocally associated with the Holocaust and the name of the museum has a seemingly universal connotation. However, the museum states that its objective is to 'to collect, keep and present historic documents about forms of physical and spiritual genocide against the Lithuanian people, and the ways and the extent of the resistance against the Soviet regime.'<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the museum is administrated by the Genocide and Research Centre of Lithuania, which 'investigates all manifestations of genocide and crimes against humanity, the persecution during the Soviet and Nazi

<sup>27</sup> Museum of Occupations, 'Sõda ja Saksa Aeg, 1941–1944' in *Eesti Lähiajaloo Okupatsioonid, 1940–1991*, Tallinn, <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/english/index.html>. Accessed on 11/17/09.

<sup>28</sup> Museum of Genocide Victims, [www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/173/c/>](http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/173/c/>). Accessed on 09/25/11.

<sup>29</sup> Museum of Genocide Victims, <http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/>, Accessed on 9/25/11.

occupations'.<sup>30</sup> This linguistic ambiguity is telling, highlighting the tension in acknowledging the universal scope of crimes against humanity committed during World War II and reconciling that with a particular, exclusive narrative focusing on the suffering of a particular 'people'. This is made even more problematic by the experiential nature of the basement exhibition – the exclusive focus there is on representations of suffering during the Soviet occupations, although the connection of the prison cells with Nazi persecutions is equally immediate. If the purpose of experiential exhibitions is to create a sense of identification between the audience and the subjects of representation, what are we to make of the decision to grant this connection to certain groups and not to others?

Though both the Estonian and Lithuanian museums claim to strive for the 'objective portrayal of history', the preferential treatment of Soviet crimes against humanity over those of the Nazi regime show how well narratives presented in the museums follow what Anthony D. Smith (1984, pp. 105–107) calls the 'myth of descent,' and specifically, the creation of a 'special dignity'. For instance, by establishing the idea of the Estonian nation as the 'victims' of World War II, the exhibition narrative endows the Estonian nation with a sense of entitlement and a special uniqueness. The victim-status of course excludes the possible presence of other victims, or worse yet, it excludes the possibility of seeing Estonians as perpetrators of oppression. Acknowledging the effects of the Holocaust in Estonia would put the Estonians on the same level with various (in fact most) other European communities who also collaborated in the Holocaust and would invalidate their claim to 'special dignity'. By the same token, to legitimate the experiences of those who suffered under the Nazi regime would universalize the narrative of suffering, thus invalidating the myth of 'special dignity'.

A more systematic method of exclusion is enacted by emphasizing certain themes in an exhibition over others. Given their finite space and resources, every museum has to make decisions on which narratives should be emphasized and which must be excluded. The Estonian museum claims to focus on the 'perspective of the average Estonian'.<sup>31</sup> The Latvian exhibition concentrates on the implications of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, thus privileging political history.<sup>32</sup> The Vilnius Museum focuses on

<sup>30</sup> Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, <http://www.genocid.lt/centras/en/>. Accessed on 9/25/11.

<sup>31</sup> Heiki Ahonen, interview with the author.

<sup>32</sup> Gundega Michel, interview with the author.

the experience of imprisonment, resistance and Soviet persecution, thus falling under the category of social history. Grūtas Park purports to convey 'a sense of how life was during the Soviet times'.<sup>33</sup> However, a look at the actual exhibitions, publications and guided tours reveals a very different impression: The Estonian museums deals overwhelmingly with political history, the Latvian museum and the Vilnius Museum mix social and political aspects, and only the Grūtas Park museum stays true to its stated focus on social and cultural history.

The Estonian museum is by far the most political of the three. Out of seven documentaries, three focus on the years of the Second World War and the last one deals with the independence movement, leaving three films with the daunting task of covering the 40 years in between. Even there, a substantial amount of screen time is given to political actors: Estonian partisans, dissidents, and deportees. The films' structure usually has the narrator lay out an interpretation of political events, followed by a brief, emotional commentary by an eyewitness, leaving little room for different assessments. The eyewitnesses are rarely true 'everymen,' but rather, in the words of the curator, 'better than average' people.<sup>34</sup> With few exceptions, this means the Estonian elites: the first movie interviews a government official, an Estonian student in 1940 and a banker on their experiences in 1940. One interviewee, to be fair, was a Russian-Estonian student in 1940, yet her commentary was still specific to the perspective of the national majority. Were she replaced by a generic *Estonian* student, the text would not necessarily have changed. In the last movie, the interviewees are almost uniquely leaders of various popular movements, in some cases even the current President of Estonia, and the commander-in-chief of the Estonian Army.

One might argue, correctly, that these are entirely logical choices in discussions of political history. However, this is precisely the crux of my critique: By *choosing* to focus on the political history of the occupation, the museum is implicitly disenfranchising population sectors who were not involved in running the country or not directly victims of Soviet repressions. This is even more evident in the publications, which deal almost exclusively with the political and military aspects of the occupations: As representatives of ethnic minorities, lower social classes, those living outside the centre of government or the war zone are excluded from the 'everyman perspective', the term 'everyman' eventually means nothing more than 'middle-class ethnic Estonian'.

<sup>33</sup> Viliūmas Malinauskas, interview with the author.

<sup>34</sup> Heiki Ahonen, interview with the author.

The Latvian museum focuses on the experiences of individuals, without presenting them as metonyms for a particular social class or community. This is evident in the museum's treatment of mass deportation, which are illustrated by a number of 'life stories', complemented with personal documents and photographs. Focusing on the personal instead of the political helps to universalize the suffering of the deportees beyond the confines of ethnicity and social class. The individualized GULAG experience is also clearly separated from the political narrative, both spatially and thematically. This distinction helps to establish a border between the necessarily subjective political interpretation of the occupation and the depiction of individual, universally tragic human suffering.

The Latvian museum also includes a wider variety of perspectives on the occupation. Panels on political history are complemented by panels dedicated to cultural and social history, such as the history of the Latvian church, newspapers, propaganda culture and so on. The history of Nazi occupation covers all aspects from book burning to the Holocaust. The post-war section contains extensive information on 'culture', 'propaganda' and 'everyday life'. The bookstore sells a series titled 'Art.Myth.Document', covering Soviet propaganda and art. By focusing on social changes affecting large groups of people regardless of ethnicity, and emphasizing the repressive nature of the Soviet culture, the museum does not excessively privilege the majority identity. At the same time, the museum remains true to its mission of celebrating Latvian culture, but depictions of sweeping social changes, individual experiences and a focus on the repressors as well as the repressed provide points of commonality that transcend exclusive ethnic identities.

Grūtas Park takes a similar approach. Its focus on the 'lifestyle' of the Soviet Union makes it difficult to find points of identification with particular national identities – the material culture, customs and propaganda were experienced by everyone in Soviet Lithuania, regardless of ethnicity. Moreover, the tone of the exhibition is decidedly ambiguous, conveying both ridicule and nostalgia at the same time. This makes binary opposites difficult to establish. On the one hand, visitors laugh at the ridiculousness of the pompous statues of Marxist leaders, but then step aside to buy a glass of *kvass* from the run-down Soviet restaurant, and perhaps drink a cup of vodka to the Party's health. The elaborate re-creations of Soviet culture can function as points of identification for *anyone* who has some familiarity with life in Soviet Lithuania.

Questions of inclusion and exclusion apply to practices as well as representation. Here too, the Latvian and Estonian museums show two contrasting approaches. The Latvian museum has made significant efforts to include communities outside of Riga, through their travelling exhibition, through teachers' education programs and through an educational outreach policy that encourages schools to plan field trips to the Museum. These activities help include a wider range of socioeconomic groups and ethnic minorities who tend to be less mobile and less centrally located. The Estonian museum, on the other hand, has no such programs, a fact explained by its significantly smaller scale and thinner wallet. Nevertheless, given the museum's location in one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods of centre city, its visitors will be almost uniquely tourists, the upper-middle class and schoolchildren of nearby neighbourhoods. Conversely, ethnic minorities, almost half of whom live in Eastern Estonia, with less access to modern technologies and easy transportation, are inevitably less likely to participate in the museum's activities.

The websites of the two museums offer a reverse example of this exclusionary practice. The Estonian museum has translated all of its films, some major exhibition items and founding documents into both English *and* Russian. Furthermore, the web page includes targeted content, custom-designed *specifically* for audiences speaking English or Russian. The English web-site offers links to general overviews of Estonian and Baltic history, whereas the Russian website offers detailed content on historical topics that have proven controversial in recent political debates concerning the legacy of World War II in the Russian Federation. At the opposite end, the web site of the Latvian museum, in a surprising reversal of their educational outreach policy, does not even have a Russian version. That said, physical outreach is likely to have both wider and deeper impact than a web site that is hardly advertised anywhere and whose layout seems to be from the 1990s, but given the budgetary constraints, it can at least be considered a genuine effort.

This manner of colouring the tragedies of the Soviet occupation with a specifically nationalist hue politicizes the exposition spaces and restricts the scope of the narratives that make it to public display to a rather narrow selection of political and elite histories. Enn Tarvel, the author of the Estonian documentaries, has once, perhaps ironically, said: 'There are also all sorts of weird topics [in history], women's history and the history of sports. Many fly high on feminist topics and gender history. I wish

there were more old-fashioned historians...' (quoted in Bärenklau, *Postimees* 07.30.2007). Perhaps these weird topics would make for a worthy addition to the museums' expositions.

### Hierarchies of power: privileging and contesting national narratives

Having looked at what is left unsaid in the museums, this chapter will now examine what is, in fact, said. This part is concerned with how the museums of occupations portray relationships between communities defined as belonging to the discourse of nationalism and communities defined as belonging to the 'outside' (Foucault 2007, pp. 76–77). The binaries of differentiation are not simply opposed; they are in a relationship of subordination. The concept of the 'self' is formed in relation to the concept of the 'other', and the self is inevitably placed in a position of privilege. 'We' are pure, uncorrupted and valid, while 'they' are impure, corrupt and invalid (Woodward 1997, p. 36).

How are these oppositions built up in the exhibitions, tours and publications of the museums of occupations? Do they perpetuate the power relationships of a nationalist discourse of history or do they attempt to undermine and subvert the traditional roles of power? What are the linguistic, rhetorical and narrative tools used to establish these relationships? Are these techniques observable in the practices of the museum, the spatial relationships of the exhibition or in other, less obvious forms? Finally, whatever relationships and oppositions one might discover in the museums of occupations, they must always be situated in the context of broader social discourse on nationalism, the crisis of memory, and other historical controversies in the Baltics.

Sometimes the hierarchies of privilege and subordination are quite obvious. The Estonian museum, with its focus on documentary films, is fairly devoid of interpretive texts. Those that do exist, however, focus solely on the perspective of the ethnic majority. A large prominent glass plaque at the very entrance of the museum introduces the objectives of the museum as follows: 'Estonia is the only home Estonians have. We want to learn what has taken place in this country and tell others about it. [...] While the suffering of Estonian victims was certainly a motivating factor in the [struggle for independence], we are where we are now thanks to the yearning for the freedom of the people and because the people never lost hope'. Never mind that the occupations also affected the numerous (though, indeed, much

smaller) populations of Baltic Germans, Russians, Jews, Armenians and Finns living in Estonia, or that some Estonians worked in collaboration with the occupying forces (both the Communists and the Nazis). The text establishes the perspective of the entire museum as one of ethnic Estonians (who, unlike *others*, have been living on their lands since time immemorial), who have suffered (whereas *others* presumably did not), and collectively won back their freedom (implying that *others* had a less significant role in this effort).

In other cases, museum narratives can undermine the implied 'otherness' of ethnic minorities, ideological opponents and anti-nationalists by recognizing the existence of these hierarchies and actively discussing and complicating these structures. The Latvian museum has established a number of educational exercises for schoolchildren forcing them to step outside their established identity and step into the shoes of various actors during various points in the occupation. For instance, the museum organizes role-plays, where participants assume the roles of various people during the 1941 mass deportations: The deportees, the Soviet soldiers, the collaborators and the refugees collectively discuss possible motivations that might have compelled these people to act in the ways they did.<sup>35</sup> This exercise attempts to subvert the victim/oppressor dichotomy by creating a situation in which the schoolchildren are guided to understand that the dynamics of mass deportations cannot be boiled down to a simple Manichean opposition. This approach, though not immune to criticism, is certainly a step away from the ethnocentrism of the Estonian museum, where the complexities of historical reality are reduced to a tale of the suffering majority.

The Estonian museum provides another example of exclusion through selective attention. Estonian soldiers are endowed with complex psychological profiles, their acts of violence are analysed and situated in historical context. Such attention is rarely awarded to those combatants who committed violence against Estonians; on the contrary, their acts are left largely unexamined and summarily condemned. The documentary on the German occupation provides a lucid example of this process. First, the narrator explains at length why Estonians were likely to join the German, or Soviet armies. 'Of course you wanted to enlist, you would've been dead if you had continued living in the conditions they had us in,' states an eyewitness. According to the documentary, Estonian sympathies towards the Germans were caused by the relative mildness of the German occupation compared to

<sup>35</sup> Ieva Gundare, interview with the author.



the Soviet 'Year of Terror'. For instance, the documentary explains, Germans recognized Estonian national symbols and traditions at least *pro forma*. These are all important considerations and potent historical arguments, but they become vehicles of justification when compared to uniquely pejorative language and lack of sophisticated argumentation in descriptions of the Soviets, who are presented as 'vandals', 'bolshevist murderers' and 'torturers'. The narrative is almost black-and-white – the Soviets were brutal murderers, who left the country burning everything in their way, tortured and killed their prisoners and finally returned with a vengeance. The Estonians, on the other hand, joined the German military because they did not have any choice. Of course, more complicated narratives exist, ones that take into account the role of volunteer Estonians in overseeing concentration camps (Maripuu 2001, pp. 135–147). Yet at the museum exposition, the *self* is defined as the positive and the neutral, whereas the *other* is 'defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity' (De Beauvoir 1994, p. 206). While certainly comforting to Estonians who suffered through the World War and the occupation, this approach is unlikely to please individuals who identify with communities who may have suffered in the hands of say, Estonian police officers, or conversely, whose ancestors are described as inherently evil murderers, a term unfitting for both the Red Army and the Wehrmacht as a whole, and overly simplistic and antagonizing in any academic context.

Similarly, in the Vilnius Genocide Museum, the focus on Soviet era suffering even though the building housed the repressive arms of *both* the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, empathizes with a particular set of victims. It could be argued that insofar as the building has become a part of the historical narratives of multiple communities, these communities also have a right to representation in this site of historical production. The narrative presented in the Genocide Museum fits the national narrative of Lithuanian suffering under the Soviet regime, but does so at the expense of those Lithuanians and others who suffered the crimes committed by Nazi Germany.

Personal testimony figures centrally in all three 'official' museums, less so at Grūtas Park. This points us towards another point of tension: all three museums recognize that personal testimonies are integral to the representation of trauma, a point of consensus in recent scholarship on museum and trauma studies (Bernard-Donals & Glejzer 2001, Caruth 1995, Kushner 2001), but insensitive use of personal testimony can both contribute to the ossification of self-other binaries, as we saw in the case

of the German occupation examples in the Lithuanian and Estonian museums, and undermine the process of mourning that personal testimony supposedly facilitates.

One problem of using personal testimony in a setting dedicated to the telling of a national story is that eye-witnesses are reduced to the role of pawns in a larger story of national victimhood. The unique experience of individuals is generalized over the whole of society, such that even if multiple perspectives are presented within a single narrative, their uniqueness is secondary to their representativeness of a national trauma. This is the case in both the Estonian and Latvian museums, where personal narratives are used in the form of documentary interviews and 'life story' panels, respectively, in depicting the first Soviet occupation and the experience of deportation to Siberia. In both cases, though the sample of testimonies presented is diverse – men, women, ethnic majorities and minorities, the stories that emerge are so similar that one can easily lose track of the unique subject in question. Three different witnesses in the documentaries presented in the Estonian museum described the Soviet occupation forces of 1940 as comical, and borderline inept, their anecdotes appearing to illustrate a general point, rather than to exemplify the diversity of experiences: 'The soldiers got off the tank, danced *kamarushka*, and drove on, once they were done with this joke', 'When the Russians came, I remember they were so comical. They had these little hats with puffs on top', 'they of course didn't know how to ride a bicycle, so they pushed each other around on the fair ground, learning how to bike. Officers and majors. [laughs]'.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in describing the general atmosphere of the 1970s, writer and philosopher Jaan Kaplinski recounts his personal experience: 'It all started with the suppression of the Prague Spring, then we really did feel like we were so done with all of it, we could just as well set ourselves on fire'.<sup>17</sup> The impression is that Kaplinski's experience is representative of society at large, although it is more likely that it was representative of a certain group of well-connected western-minded intellectuals. Rather than illustrating the diversity of social experiences, personal narratives, even when they incorporate people of diverse backgrounds, underscore a specific narrative of unequivocal oppression.

<sup>16</sup> Museum of Occupations, 'Esimene Punane Aasta, 1940–1941' in *Eesti Lähiajaloo Okupatsioonid, 1940–1991*, Tallinn, <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/et/filmid>, Accessed on 12/6/11.

<sup>17</sup> Museum of Occupations, 'Stagnatsiooniaeg, 1968–1987' in *Eesti Lähiajaloo Okupatsioonid, 1940–1991*, Tallinn, <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/et/filmid>, Accessed on 12/6/11.

In the Latvian museum, personal testimony sometimes functions as a literal illustration of large historical events such as mass deportations, the Holocaust and so on. These events are illustrated by photos of specific people, who were deported, died in concentration camps, or conversely harboured Jews during World War II. Often, though not always, the context provided in the exhibition is limited to names and dates of birth and death. On the one hand, while the use of personal photos, artefacts and life stories is more extensive and diverse in terms of both perspective and narrative, it raises questions about the commodification of trauma and of individual experience. Could the decision to have representations of individual tragedies speak in the name of the overall narrative presented in the museum be seen as both an impediment to the processing of trauma (LaCapra 1998, pp. 5–6) and as eliding the real challenge of representing violent historical processes: acknowledging the impossibility of placing them in easy, coherent historical narratives? (Liss 1998, p. 118) Thus, in thinking about the ways in which the emphasis on representing a national narrative excludes or downplays other aspects of the occupations era, we must keep in mind not just the *communities* who may be disempowered in the process, but also the interests of the individual actors who ended up as part of the exhibitions.

One way of avoiding the reproduction of privilege and power relations in museum narratives is by explicitly acknowledging their existence in the society-at-large. The final chapter of the Latvian museum's official publication candidly discusses both the on-going integration debate and the conflict of memory surrounding interpretations of nationality and occupation. Instead of adopting the prevailing oppositions of the debate, such as 'nationals' versus 'foreigners' or 'citizens' versus 'non-citizens', the publication frames the debate in terms of 'radicals' and 'moderates', a distinction that crosses identity boundaries and directly undermines the ethno-nationalist paradigm. 'It does not help that small but vociferous radical groups on both sides oftentimes set the tone in public debates' (Nollendorfs 2008, p. 211). With this simple short sentence, the museum distances itself from the dominant discourse of nationalism, and diffuses suspicions of complicity with the ethnic majority.

Where the Estonian exhibition adopts the categories of difference and subordination ascribed by the nationalist discourse, the Latvian exhibition complicates these oppositions and provides alternative terms of discourse.

Grūtas Park treads a somewhat schizophrenic path, sometimes falling into the trap of reproducing prevalent ethnic oppositions, but in other cases problematizing and subverting these relationships in a variety of ways. Unfortunately, examples of the former far outweigh examples of the latter in both quantity and degree. By repeatedly conflating the terms 'Soviet' and 'Russian,' the audio presentation constantly replicates a staple opposition.<sup>38</sup> The audio tour regularly describes the Other in broad generalizations, calling the Soviet repressive authorities 'genocidal' and 'criminal,' often with no additional commentary. Meanwhile, ample explanation is provided for the complicity of ordinary Lithuanians in the Soviet regime: 'It was not worth it to oppose the Soviet regime – you would either suffer the same fate [as dissidents who were killed by the KGB] or be exiled to Siberia.'<sup>39</sup>

Yet ironically, the park also contests the traditional categories of the Self and the Other in a variety of ways. A section of the exhibition dedicated to the genesis of the Park itself provides a lucid illustration. The entire section seems motivated more by self-indulgence than self-reflection – most of the discussion consists of establishing Grūtas Park as the 'first,' 'biggest,' 'most expensive' and 'most popular' of commemorative museums in Eastern Europe.<sup>40</sup> However, one anecdote relayed in the process serves as a potent reminder of the ambiguity of the oppressor/victim paradigm. When the museum was opened as a private, commercial institution, it fell under substantial criticism in the Lithuanian media for ridiculing what many Lithuanians considered a delicate and almost sacred topic – the occupation. Indeed, Viliumas Malinauskas, the mushroom millionaire turned museum manager said that one of the primary goals of the exhibition is to help people 'to stop fearing the times, and tell the story as it is – a story with some humour.'<sup>41</sup> His response to public criticism certainly had a sense of humour – he had statues made of some of the most vociferous critics and put them next to Soviet statues making up the bulk of the exhibition. The irony was twofold – many of the critics, now prominent statesmen of the Lithuanian republic, were former members of the Communist Party.<sup>42</sup>

Whatever Malinauskas' intentions were in creating this little addition to the exhibition, the result was a persuasive complication of

<sup>38</sup> Grūtas Park audioguide, item 55, 57 are just two examples.

<sup>39</sup> Grūtas Park audioguide, item 50.

<sup>40</sup> Grūtas Park audioguide, items 1–18.

<sup>41</sup> Malinauskas, interview with the author.

<sup>42</sup> Grūtas Park audioguide, item 11.

the traditional national narrative. First, it decouples the victim/oppressor dichotomy from the local/foreign opposition, by pointing out that many who are now waving the flag of Lithuanian nationalism stood behind the Red Flag with equal fervour only a few decades earlier. Second, contesting the authority of the nation-state, the museum subverts another key aspect of ethnonational discourse, according to which subscribing to a Lithuanian identity must entail subscribing to the institutions of the Lithuanian nation-state.

Still, one has to admit that calling Grūtas Park 'irreverent' in its treatment of the Soviet Occupations is, in fact, a very precise characterization. After all, the Park has put a petting zoo next to replicas of Soviet artillery, plays Lithuanian Communist Party numbers for laughs, serves Kvass out of nostalgic food-trucks, complete with the unhygienic reusable glasses, and sells vodka mugs with toasts to one of 20th century's greatest dictators. The critics of the museums saw this as a major problem, to the extent that the museum has acquired a reputation for being a 'Disneyfied representation of the occupation, StalinWorld, so to speak'.<sup>43</sup> From the perspective of identity creation, however, this 'irreverent' presentation can be seen as a form of subversion, particularly in contrast with the sacralising occupation narratives in the Latvian and Estonian museums.

At first, the purpose of marking one identity as 'sacred' and another as 'ridiculous' or 'profane' seems obvious. We mark ourselves as sacred, the other as profane and thus a power relationship is established. Yet in the case of Grūtas Park, one finds oneself facing the question: whose identity exactly is being marked? Critics seem to believe that the park undermines Lithuanian identity, it profanes what is meant to be sacred and corrupts what is meant to pure. The memory of the Soviet occupation has become a sacred part of Lithuanian identity, the horrors of mass deportations, the repression of free speech and loss of independence its key components; a depiction of these events in jest leaves a mark on the memory as a whole. However, another reading of the Park, provided by its director, suggests that what is being ridiculed is the Soviet occupation in all of its absurdity and irrationality, as a counterpoint to the sacred and respected Lithuanian nationalism. In this interpretation, the 'profane' is still the Other, the Soviet antagonist. In Malinauskas' view, the Park strengthens the national narrative, instead of undermining it.

Perhaps the very existence of this confusion hints at the possibility of a Derridean reading of the Park, in which the sacred/profane

<sup>43</sup> Malinauskas, interview with the author.

dichotomy is altogether deconstructed. If one is to believe Derrida, then the sacred/profane binary cannot be sustained, due to its very nature as a static binary. The problematization of that binary in the space of the Park is just a manifestation of a fundamental contradiction. Instead of simply reproducing ethnonational oppositions, or substituting them with new, equally divisive oppositions (although both happen on numerous specific instances within the exposition), the Park as a whole questions the very notion of identity as a discreetly defined binary of similarity and difference. The fundamental ambiguity of 'sacredness' and 'profanity' is revealed by providing a space in which the 'sacred' is shown as containing elements of the profane, even we believe them to be absent (or, to follow Derrida more closely, precisely *because we believe them to be absent*).<sup>44</sup>

The Latvian and Estonian museums, along with the Vilnius Genocide Museum, show little of that ambiguity; instead, they appear tied to the mythology of the nation-state both physically and ideologically. Physically, in the sense that they are both located next to important institutions of state power: the parliament, town hall, and other important national landmarks are only a stone's throw away. The Genocide Museum in Vilnius also houses the Lithuanian Court of Appeals. Of course, state institutions are often centres of tourism, and any museum aspiring for any sort of popular recognition would want to place themselves in the centre of attention. From a purely commercial perspective, the three museums have made excellent choices (though certainly not the only possible ones, given that Grūtas Park, by far the most popular of the three, is located in the middle of a forest, and a two-hour drive from Vilnius).

Yet the connection with the institutions of the nation-state goes deeper than just locations and funding schemes. The two museums seem to function as seemingly independent legitimisers of state authority and state ideology. Both museums display at their entrance photographs of and gifts from various heads of state who have passed through the premises on official visits and other ceremonial occasions. The museums of occupation are required stops for any cortege of foreign statesmen visiting the Baltics, alongside parliaments, national churches, famous battlegrounds

<sup>44</sup> Grūtas Park as a deconstruction of Lithuanian identity is of course a topic well deserving of its own essay, and the analysis provided above is only a very crude outline of Derrida's method. For a better understanding of this complication of what appears to be rigid binary opposition, Derrida's essay on 'Plato's Pharmacy' in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 114–142, provides a good introduction.

and other symbols of national identity. The museum contents thus becomes marked as sacred, stamped with a big red mark saying 'contestation not permitted,' and those disagreeing with the message of the exhibition (and as we have noted, there are many who would) are forced to reject not simply a subjective interpretation of a historical period, but an important national symbol with connections to state authority, civic identity and presumably democracy and liberty as well.

The Estonian museum, which purports to an 'objective, and visually transparent recounting of history'<sup>45</sup> and presents a narrative well in accordance with the tropes of Estonian nationalism, is more unambiguously an extension of state power than its Latvian counterpart. The latter is housed in the building originally constructed as the museum of the Latvian Red Riflemen, Latvian soldiers with communist allegiances who took part in the attempt to establish a Latvian Socialist Republic in 1918. It is quite ironic that the building originally designed to commemorate the 'fight against bourgeois nationalism' would now function to celebrate Latvian culture and remind of the atrocities committed by those who sought to destroy it. The museum stands as a reminder that through the opposition to Soviet occupation, Latvian identity has become fused with the Soviet one, providing traces of a deconstructive attitude similar to the one we saw in Grūtas Park.

In both practices and representations, as we have seen, the Latvian museum is far less accepting of the Baltic nationalist dogma than its Estonian cousin. However, its friendly relationship with state institutions is far harder to deny. Herein lies the insidiousness of legitimizing power through a seemingly independent institution: by leaving the impression that the state has no official relation to the museum, the politicians are left with an opportunity to be 'seen to be paying respect, while leaving any controversies or mistakes with the institution' (Williams 2007, 107).

### Conclusions, Complications and Consequences

The widely different relationships between the three museums of occupation have and official national narratives seem to be closely tied to the presuppositions about the nature of history that underlie their exhibitions and practices. Museums that provide more complex accounts of recent

<sup>45</sup> Ahonen, interview with the author.

history seem to recognize the museum's role as a discursive institution, or at least admit to a degree of subjectivity in their narratives. On the other hand, claims to 'objectivity' and 'telling things as they happened' go hand in hand with reproductions of dominant national narratives. The fundamental premise of the Estonian museum is to 'let the objects speak for themselves', to avoid over dramatization and to stay close to a 'dispassionate, close-to-objective' representation of history. According to the museum's director, 'contemporary history is a topic that needs to be dealt with objectively if possible, so to speak, and with visual transparency as well'.<sup>46</sup> Of course, this premise turns out to be the museum's undoing: neither artefacts nor history can be portrayed 'as-is', and pretending otherwise leads to the implicit acceptance of existing discourses, a dearth of critical attitude and a tendency to privilege the research of 'facts' over the analysis of interpretations. It is worth quoting Spencer Crew and James Sims (1991, p.159) on the possibility of 'transparent and objective' museology: 'The problem with things is that they are dumb. They are not eloquent, as some thinkers in art museums claim. They are dumb. And if by some ventriloquism they seem to speak, they lie'.

The Latvian example shows that a more productive approach to interrogating issues of power and avoiding the perpetuation of existing imbalances can be achieved by openly recognizing the issues framing the dissemination of identity in the museums. Acknowledging the subjectivity of the national narrative and the crisis of memory that pervades Latvian society allows the Latvian museum to fulfil its task of commemorating and celebrating Latvian culture and remembering the tragedies of the past, without allowing these stories to become contributors to the discourses of power and domination.

Like the Latvian museum, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius is a 'hot museum' (Uzzell & Ballantyne 1998, p. 152), one that melds interpretation with a conscious attempt at eliciting an emotional response from the visitor, not by 'showing things as they were', but by encouraging and anticipating emotional reactions. On the one hand, this approach, present here more clearly than in the Latvian museum, is generally recognized as contributing to an understanding of both trauma and commemoration as cognitive experiences, where the impact of aesthetics, space and wonder should be recognized and celebrated, rather than suppressed. However, such an approach should contribute to the 'working

<sup>46</sup> Ahonen, interview with the author.



through' trauma, not sacrificing critical distance and resistance to easy Manichean oppositions in favour of a powerful, yet ultimately misleading story. Though the Vilnius museum excels at representing the individual tragedy of a KGB prisoner, it makes too many concessions in support of the national narrative, particularly since the site of the museum itself, having functioned as the headquarters of the both the KGB and the Gestapo, is particularly loaded.

Grūtas Park, like an inexperienced puppy dog, provides the scholar, often unintentionally, with moments of intense satisfaction amidst a sea of mishaps and bad decisions. Where it discredits the rigid binary oppositions of national mythology, it does so largely by accident, although with tremendous enthusiasm. And as much as you would like to congratulate it for the successful deconstruction of Lithuanian/Communist oppositions and the desacralisation of national identity, you cannot but stare at the puddle of ethnocentric narratives it has produced with the same eager spontaneity. The scholarly value of the project is difficult to evaluate, largely because it is not intended to be a scholarly project, but rather a capitalist enterprise, with all the associated problems: it commodifies tragedy, simplifies complex events and reproduces convenient mythologies of communist absurdities instead of encouraging a critical perspective. It is quite unclear whether Grūtas Park functions primarily as a clever play on the received notions of identity and memory, or simply as a Disneyfication of tragedy, leaving everyone with a feeling of emptiness and a strange allergy towards capitalism. Finally, of course, both could be true, and perhaps the intent, in this case, is not as important as the outcome, which is both provocative and complicated, challenging the very foundations of common understandings of nationalism.

Other studies of the Baltic Museums of Occupations have emphasized various aspects also explored here. Scholars have paid particular attention to the lack of attention to the German occupation and the Holocaust (Mark 2008; Burch & Zander 2010; Apor 2002). The prevalent argument here is that fascism, when it was represented at all, had to be framed so that it 'confirmed the dominant anti-communist script, and its crimes were not invested with power ascribed to those of Communism' (Mark 2008, p. 369). This is certainly a valid argument, but as the present study has shown, a look at the specific practices of inclusion and exclusion, power and domination demonstrates that even the more dogmatic representations of national identity, such as those portrayed in Tallinn or Grūtas, are not

without internal tensions. They reveal once again the tenuous, unstable nature of national narratives, as well as the problematic nature of many curatorial practices employed at the museums to seemingly virtuous ends, with the incorporation of personal testimonies being just one example.

The above evaluations of the museums are inevitably complicated by the fact that the material reality, established museum practices, the social context, the short history of pluralist and multicultural education in the Baltics colour museum practices in the museums of occupations as well as elsewhere. As much as the curators of the memorial museums might like to break boundaries and deconstruct dominant narratives, they are faced with a number of challenges that steer them towards an ethnonationalist interpretation of occupation. Patrons who donate artefacts to the museums are more likely to be valiant nationalists, symbols of national heritage are more likely to have survived in private collections than everyday items that can be used to illustrate the stories of individuals and marginalized groups. The pressures of a market economy force museums to purchase guest exhibitions and emphasize narratives that invite wealthy and privileged audiences, with fat wallets and conservative nationalist mindsets. The lack of qualified specialists makes it difficult for museums to design exhibitions that transcend traditional museum practices. Fifty years of Soviet rule has created a situation where few Baltic historians have intimate knowledge of postwar developments in historical theory. Social history, not to mention gender history or subaltern history, has yet to become a popular field of research. The Estonian museum occasionally (often under the sponsorship of Jewish foundations) screens movies focusing on the Holocaust. The Latvian museum is currently hard at work on compiling a new, improved exhibition that pays more attention to the equal treatment of varied topics, prioritizes individual experience over broad generalizations, and embraces multiple perspectives and a plurality of voices. The Museum of Genocide Victims now includes a section on Jewish history. Grūtas Park faces its own share of problems due to its location in the middle of the Lithuanian countryside, almost unreachable without a car. We might be offended – or amused – by the petting zoo next to busts of Stalin, but would we solve the problem of catering to a large number of visiting families any differently?<sup>47</sup> Still, museums should ideally work towards becoming institutions of liberation, not of colonization.

<sup>47</sup> Ahonen, interview with the author, on the difficulties of acquiring artifacts and compiling the exhibition. Nollendorfs, interview with the author, on attracting specific audiences, and the new exhibition. Malinauskas, interview with the author, on the problem of family visits.

Or, as Foucault (1984, pp. 32–50) would put it, museums should embody a 'critical limit-attitude', the positive aspect of the Enlightenment, and not the universalizing, homogenizing streak that all too often means subjugation under the guise of 'Truth and Freedom'.

Finally, this evaluation must consider the two important pivots that form the foundation of our value system: responsible museum practices on the micro level and the possible impact of the exhibitions on social cohesion, social justice and identity formation on the macro level. Upon closer inspection, of course, it turns out that the two are, in fact, much the same, as both presuppose (correctly) an understanding of museums as discursive, fundamentally political institutions, thus imbuing them with the same responsibilities that we would expect in any political body, be it the government, the school system or the academia.

In order to understand what is really at stake, here is a brief summary of the consequences associated with reproducing ethnocentrist narratives of national identity. As Jeffrey Olick has noted, any official representation of memory contains a desire for 'normalization' of the past. The image of the past that forms the backbone of national narratives is an idealized past, a past as we would like to see it and thus also containing instructions for a future as we would like to construct it (Olick 2003, p. 17). Thus the ethnonationalist mythology prescribes a society that is culturally and linguistically homogenous, shares ideals of unity and uniqueness, the membership of which is based on birth, rather than choice (Smith 2001, pp. 39–41). Research has shown that while the socio-economic differences between majority and minority groups in the Baltics continue to decrease, conflicts of memory and identity are increasingly likely to occur and tolerance towards 'out-groups' has decreased in recent years in all three countries (Pettai 2006, pp. 124–136). The classical Eastern European model of the nation-state, based on the domination of an ethnic elite is quite simply not sustainable in a multi-ethnic, highly globalized environment, yet it is quite hard to see how the status quo could change without a profound change first in the underlying discourse that establishes modes of 'permitted' thought. The role of discursive institutions, such as museums, is therefore critical in helping to bring about these changes. The 'liberation' of the museums from the trappings of dominant ideologies, without destroying the heritage contained within, is an important challenge that the museums of occupation inevitably have to confront.

## References

- Ahonen H. (2004) *Estonia's Occupations Revisited: Accounts of An Area* (Tallinn: The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation).
- Anderson B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso).
- Apor, P. (2010) 'Eurocommunism: Commemorating Communism in Contemporary Eastern Europe' in M. Pakisch & B. Strath (eds.) (2010) *A European Memory?: Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn Books).
- Bärenklau, I. 'Intervju Enn Tarveliga' *Postimees*, 30.07.07.
- Bartov, O. (2000) *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Beauvoir S. (1994) in M. B. Mahowald (ed.) (1994) *The Second Sex in Philosophy of woman: an anthology of classic to current concepts* (New York: Hackett Publishing).
- Budrytė, Dovilė (2004), 'We Call It Genocide': Soviet Deportations and Repressions in the Memory of Lithuanians' in R. S. Frey (ed), *The Genocidal Temptation: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Rwanda, and Beyond* (Lanham: University Press of America)
- Budrytė, Dovilė (2005), *Taming Nationalism?: Political Community-Building in Post-Soviet Baltic States* (Burlington: Ashgate).
- Burch, S. & Zander, U. (2010) 'Preoccupied by the Past: The Case of Estonian's Museum of Occupations' in *Scandia* 74:2, pp. 55–73.
- Crew S. R. & Sims J. E. (1991) 'Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue' in I. Karp & S. Levine (eds) (2003) *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum* (Washington: Smithsonian).
- Derrida J. (1991) 'On Plato's "Pharmacy"' in P. Kamuf (ed.) (1991) *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 114–142.
- Druvaskalne I. D., & Slara A. (2006) 'Tourism Challenges in the Baltic States Since EU Enlargement' *European Regional Science Association Conference Paper*, <http://ideas.repec.org/p/wiw/wiwsa/ersa06p121.html>, Last Accessed 11/15/09.
- Ehin P. & Berg E. (eds) (2009) 'Incompatible Identities? Baltic-Russian Relations and the EU as an area for Identity Conflict,' *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration* (Hampshire: Ashgate) pp. 1–15.
- Ezergailis A. (2005) *Nazi/Soviet Disinformation about the Holocaust in Nazi-Occupied Latvia* (Riga: OMF).
- Foucault M. (1980) 'Truth and Power' in C. Gordon (ed) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon), pp. 109–133.
- Foucault, M. (1984) 'What is Enlightenment,' in P. Rabinow, ed. (1984) *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon), pp. 31–50.
- Foucault, M. (2007) *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge).
- Goals and Objectives* (Tallinn: The Kistler-ritso Estonian Foundation), <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/english/index.html>, Last Accessed 11/15/09.
- Gordon F. (2001) *Latvians and Jews: Between Germany and Russia* (Stockholm: Memento).
- Hall, S. (1989) 'Ethnicity: Identity and Difference' *Radical America*, 23, 4, pp. 9–20.
- Hein, H. (2006) *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently* (Berkeley: Altamira Press)
- [http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/pdf/conclusions\\_en\\_1941-1944.pdf](http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/pdf/conclusions_en_1941-1944.pdf), Last Accessed 12/03/09.
- Hio, T. (ed) (2004) 'Conclusions: 1941–1944' *The German Occupation in Estonia 1941–1944* (Tallinn: Estonian International Commission for Investigating Crimes Against Humanity).
- Katrigo, S. (2009) 'War Memorials and the Politics of Memory: the Soviet War Memorial in Tallinn' *Constellations*, 16, 1, pp. 150–166.
- 'Kremlin disputes Baltic claims' *The Times* (2005) May 6, 2005.

- Kushner, T. (2001) 'Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting,' in *Oral History* (Autumn, 2001), pp. 83–94.
- Kultuuriministeeriumi valitsemisala Eelarve 2009 (2009) (Tallinn: Eesti Vabariigi Kultuuriministeerium) [http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/erle/KUM\\_2009\\_eelarve\\_seis\\_03\\_08\\_2009.xls](http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/erle/KUM_2009_eelarve_seis_03_08_2009.xls), Last Accessed 11/15/09.
- LaCapra, D. (1998) 'An Interview with Professor Dominick LaCapra' in *Eclipse of Humanity* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem).
- LaCapra, D. (2001) *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, (Baltimore: JHU Press).
- Laar M. (2005) *Birds-Eye View of Estonian History* (Tallinn: Grenader).
- Laar M. (2005) *Estonia in World War II* (Tallinn: Grenader).
- Laar M. (2005) *The Forgotten War: Armed Resistance Movement in Estonia 1944–1956* (Tallinn: Grenader).
- Liss, A. (1998) *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- MacQueen M. (1998) 'The Context of Mass Destruction: Agents and Prerequisites of the Holocaust in Lithuania' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 12, 1, pp. 27–48.
- Mark, J. (2008) 'Containing Fascism: History in Post-Communist Baltic Occupation and Genocide Museums' in *Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989* (Budapest: CEU Press) pp. 335–369.
- Maripuu M. (2001) 'Eesti juutide holokaust ja eestlased' *Vikerkaar*, 8–9, pp. 135–147.
- Nollendorfs V. (2008) *Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991* (Riga: Museum of the Occupation of Latvia).
- Nollendorfs V. & Neiburgs U. (2006) *The Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia* (Riga: Museum of Latvian Occupations).
- Olick, J. (eds) (2003) *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham: Duke University Press).
- Pertai, V. (2006) 'Explaining ethnic politics in the Baltic States: Reviewing the triadic nexus model' *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 37, 1, pp. 124–136.
- Publications, (Riga: OMF) [http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=28](http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=28), Last Accessed 12/01/09.
- Rex J. (1995) 'Multiculturalism in Europe and America' in *Nations and Nationalism*, 1, 2, pp. 243–259.
- 'Sõda ja Saksa Aeg, 1941–1944' *Eesti Lühiajaloo Okupatsioonid, 1940–1991* (Tallinn: Eesti Okupatsioonimuuseum) <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/english/index.html>, Accessed 11/17/09.
- Skultans, V. (1996) 'Looking for a Subject: Latvian Memory and Narrative' *History of the Human Sciences*, 9, 4, pp. 65–80.
- Smith A. D. (1984) 'National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent' *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*, 1, 7, pp. 93–130.
- Smith, A. D. (1999) *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Smith, A. D. (2001) *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (New York: Blackwell).
- Smith, D. J. (2008) "'Woe from Stones': Commemoration, Identity Politics, and Estonia's 'War of Monuments'" *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 39, 4, 419–430.
- Tamm, M. (2012) *Monumentaalne Ajalugu: Eesleid Eesti ajalookultuurist* (Tallinn: Loomingu Raamatukogu).
- Teadustegevuse Põhisuunad ja Prioriteetid* (Tallinn: The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation) <http://www.okupatsioon.ee/tegevus/tegevus.html>, Last Accessed 12/01/09.
- Uzzell, D. L. & Ballantyne R. (1998) 'Heritage that Hurts: Interpretation in a Postmodern World' in D. L. Uzzell and R. Ballantyne (eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation: Problems and Prospects* (London: The Stationery Office).
- Vetrik, R. (2012) *Eesti Poliitika ja Valitsemine, 1991–2011* (Tallinn: Tallinn University Press).
- Walsh K. (1992) *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (New York: Routledge).

- Weiss-Wendt A. (2008) 'Why the Holocaust Does Not Matter to Estonians' *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 39, 4, pp. 475-497.
- Williams P. (2007) *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Berq: Oxford).
- Williams, P. (2008) 'The Afterlife of Communist Statuary: Hungary's Szoborpark and Lithuania's Grūtas Park' *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 44, 2, pp. 185-198.
- Woodward K. (ed) (1997) *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage).

Modris Eksteins

## Artūrs<sup>1</sup>

Buttons. A handful of them. The small suitcase, when it was returned in May 1941, contained his pullover, boots, and those buttons.

Trouser buttons they were. The chekists used to snip off the buttons from a prisoner's trousers so that he couldn't run – if he tried, his pants would drop. If he hadn't been able to run, and the suitcase was returned, there was no hope.

The family found a trace of comfort in the thought that he had been deported, to the Russian tundra, in such haste that he had been unable to take his belongings. The prison had been so warm, they told themselves, that he hadn't needed his pullover or boots. But the buttons betrayed the hope.

Why had those buttons been put back in his suitcase? To offer a wisp of hope? To suggest the return of better days – of movement and freedom? The buttons both put the questions and answered them. They spoke of power and humiliation.

Artūrs Vajeiks, son of Jānis, grandson of Grieta, had known that he should get rid of his little arsenal, the pistol, the rifle, the truncheon, and the machine gun. Those orders were clear and widely circulated after the Russians moved into Latvia, yet again, on June 17, 1940. The Aizsargi, the home guard to which Artūrs belonged, were given emphatic instructions to surrender all weapons. But those few arms were important to Artūrs. The machine gun, which belonged to the Aizsargi, he had hidden in the well, the other pieces here and there. The rifle, however – his rifle – he had kept close at hand, in the attic. He couldn't have fought a private war with these weapons;

<sup>1</sup> Extract from Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999). pp. 120–28. Printed with a permission of the author.

even armed resistance against the invader at some point in the future was sheer fantasy. Those weapons were symbols. If Artūrs had given them up, he would have been surrendering his own identity and that of his generation.

For a long time Artūrs Vajeiks wasn't even an official statistic. We did not know where his body lay. He was part of an estimate. He was thirty years old when he was taken away on February 19, 1941. His date of birth is known. His death was for the longest time a matter of speculation. To his family and friends he simply disappeared. In an age when soldiers no longer necessarily wore uniforms, he went missing in action.

He was part of a generation that got caught up in a maelstrom of violence, driven by a vague vision of emancipation and power but even more by whim. In his daydreams he wished to be a hero in a free Latvia, but in the end he was prompted by rather more trite considerations. He liked the smart uniform, the camaraderie, the admiration of the girls, and he was terrified by the void that accompanied inactivity. Some said he was a wild youth. Others merely called him spirited. He never finished school. He took off several times for tours around Europe on his motorcycle. That added to his bravado. In the rural setting he was quite the Don Juan. His temperament seemed to match the age and territory in which he lived, full of contradictions, ambiguities, energy.

On that Wednesday, February 19, Artūrs Vajeiks was planning to take a load of timber to Jelgava for cutting at the mill. Instead, he was arrested early while breakfasting with his wife, Valija. They had married less than two years earlier, in 1939. Members of the railway police, an auxiliary force, came for him. The charges against him were that he had 'assisted the international bourgeoisie, belonged to a counterrevolutionary organization, and stashed weapons illegally'. The weapons charge was the most serious.

Artūrs had already been questioned once, some weeks earlier. He had been called into Jelgava for interrogation. After that experience he told his father that it was time to go into hiding. But out of concern for the safety of his wife and newborn child, a son born the previous October, he never did. His best friend, also called Artūrs, worked for the railway and was, befitting the polarities of the time, a Communist. After the first interrogation, the friend told my uncle never to sign anything put before him by Communist officials, and by all means immediately to dispose of the weapons. It was the rifle they found.

After his arrest he was first taken to Jelgava, then transported to Riga and held there in the Central Prison, whose dumb



walls had witnessed so much horror. One of his two sisters, Leontīne, went regularly to the prison to bring food and seek information. She stood in long lines to speak briefly to brusque, uncommunicative apparatchiks who perused lists and said nothing. Until May her food parcels were accepted. Then one day in May she was turned away, told to take her parcel with her and not bother to return. That spring an American official in Moscow noted, after visiting Lithuania: 'People have no opportunity of seeing their relatives once they have been arrested and only know if they are alive if the prison authorities continue to accept clothing and food for those in prison.'

The family could now do nothing more than hope for the best and assume that Artūrs had been deported to Siberia. When the Germans arrived in early July and found hastily dug mass graves on the grounds of Central Prison and on the outskirts of Riga, they invited citizens to come and identify corpses. Artūrs's family did not attend, ostensibly because they wanted to believe he had been evacuated east. Even when the family retrieved his suitcase, the charade continued.

As the years went by, the war years and then the postwar tribulations, the hope that Artūrs might still be alive gradually evaporated. All in the immediate family except for his parents, Jānis and Pauline, fled Latvia in 1944. Artūrs's wife remarried in the Latvian diaspora. We now assumed that Artūrs had been shot in Central Prison in May 1941.

When Latvia regained its independence fifty years later, in 1991, and archive doors opened, a goddaughter of Artūrs Vajeiks who had remained in Latvia discovered, to the considerable surprise of the remaining family abroad, that Artūrs had indeed been shipped east at some point in May or June 1941, to Astrakhan, in the Stalingrad district, and had been held there, in Prison Number 2, for many months. On February 11, 1942, almost a year after his arrest, he had been found guilty under the criminal statutes of the Soviet Union and sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out on the prison grounds a month later, on March 14.

In August 1995 the Republic of Latvia 'rehabilitated' Artūrs Vajeiks.

### Youth, Soldier, Churchman

For my father, 1940 was also a fateful year. Artūrs Vajeiks was arrested because he was prepared to fight the Bolsheviks. My father, Rūdolfs Ekšteins, was not arrested, even though he had fought the Bolsheviks, militarily and spiritually.

He had taken part in the last military sweep against them through the province of Latgale, and later he had become a churchman, a pursuit anathema to the Communists. His survival in 1940 he found perplexing, then and thereafter.

Born in Liepāja in 1899, he was a fishmonger's son who never spoke to us about his family and his youth. In fact, he seemed to want to negate his origins. He refused to eat pickled herring. He could not abide its smell. His father and mother had sold herring along the docks and at the central market of Liepāja.

He, his sister, and his parents lived in a tiny row house, consisting of one room and a kitchen, on Cemetery Street (*Kapsētas iela*) in a working-class district near the dockyards. Though its origins as a fishing village went back to the Middle Ages, Liepāja was essentially a nineteenth-century town whose modern development was encouraged by the final partition of Poland in 1795, when Kurland was annexed by Russia. Ice free throughout the year, the port became an important Russian naval facility. The construction of a railway line in the 1870s linking the city to the hinterland turned Liepāja into a major trading center. The economic vitality was accompanied by the usual extremes of early capitalist growth. With its beautiful beach, rivaling the brilliant sands of Jūrmala, near Riga, Liepāja developed by the end of the nineteenth century into a smart resort city, preferred by Russian high society. At the same time, the city's sizable proletariat acquired a reputation for radicalism.

My father's schooling, which coincided with the push to Russify the Baltic provinces, had been for the most part in Russian. To the end of his life he spoke the language well. He later recalled Russian soldiers going from house to house on his street in 1905 looking for revolutionaries. They searched his small house too, poking bayonets into mattresses. And in 1912, for the three hundredth anniversary of the Romanov dynasty, his entire school class had to watch an imperial procession and bellow 'Long live the tsar!'

During, most of the Great War Liepāja was occupied by the Germans. The port was a supply nexus for the German army on the eastern front. His schooling interrupted, my father spent several years as a young dockworker, unloading coal and war materiel from German ships. At the end of the war, when the Bolsheviks invaded, the Ulmanis government fled from Riga to Jelgava and then to Liepāja. The port city appeared for a time to be the last bastion of hopes for Latvian independence and freedom. My father, age nineteen, volunteered for the national army and was eventually assigned to a newly established unit, the Eleventh Dobeles Infantry Regiment. In the

autumn of 1919 his unit was sent to Daugavpils (Dünaburg), in the eastern part of the country, and joined in the fighting there that finally drove the Bolsheviks out of Latvia.

He had grown up in a devoutly religious atmosphere. His parents were members of a Baptist church in Liepāja. The Baptists were a small sect in Latvia and in continental Europe as a whole. Their roots in the Baltic were not deep, going back only to the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1890s the mantle of Baptist leadership in Latvia had passed to Jānis Freijs, an energetic young entrepreneur, then in his thirties, who had training in mechanical engineering as well as theology. He displayed both a beguiling practicality and a firm religiosity. This combination attracted much attention. He ran his own printing businesses, which published hymn books, religious calendars, and tracts. He traveled to Palestine, Turkey, Greece, and Italy to observe at first hand the lands where Christianity originated. Entranced by the modern, he cycled from Riga to Paris and back in 1900. He loved machines, whether they were printing presses or automobiles. He would be one of the first in Latvia to own a motorcar. Convinced that religion was a matter of this world, not some imagined Nirvana, he ran in 1909 for elected office, as a candidate for the Riga city council, and won.

He had been introduced to Natalie Princess von Lieven through the evangelist F. W. Baedeker, an associate of Lord Radstock's; he had impressed her with his dedication and missionary zeal and had received from her considerable financial support for his work.

In October 1915, more than a year after the outbreak of war, Freijs was exiled to Siberia. No official reason was given, but by the tsar's officials Baptists were regarded as disrupters and potential insurrectionists and also, perhaps because of their origins in Reformation Germany, as friends of the German cause. A number of other Baptist ministers in the Latvian-speaking provinces of Russia were banished, their churches, forty in number, closed. Five churches were totally destroyed, seventeen damaged.

In April 1917, however, after the first revolution that year in Russia, the deportation order against Freijs was lifted by the provisional Russian government, and in August he returned to Riga. His trials were not over, though. When the Bolsheviks occupied Riga in January 1919, he was again imprisoned; he spent the better part of five months in various jails, in sordid conditions, and was one of the few prisoners who survived the brutality, executions, and typhus epidemics. Owing to the intervention of a young Latvian Bolshevik who had once heard him preach, Freijs was released

a mere three days before the slaughter of prisoners that accompanied the liberation of Riga on May 22. Thus the attacks against this churchman came from all sides, from within and without, from right and left. His influence on my father was to be immense.

In 1920–21 Freijs visited England and North America. There he garnered substantial aid for Latvian victims and for the needy. Clothing, blankets, and shoes were sent and distributed to some five thousand children and adults. But Freijs also managed to convince British, American, and Canadian Baptists of the need to help establish a Baptist seminary in Riga that would educate future Latvian churchmen. Only such an establishment, he argued, would allow the denomination to flourish in a state where Lutheranism was dominant. The Riga seminary opened its doors in January 1922, in temporary quarters in the Baltic-German Baptist church on Vilandes Street.

Released from the army, my father applied to the seminary in the spring of 1923 and was accepted. He flourished under the tutelage of Freijs, and in 1925 went off to study for three years as a scholarship student at the Baptist College in Bristol, England. (The college is now part of Bristol University.) Founded in 1679, this college, along with Regent's Park, Oxford, became the most distinguished Baptist educational establishment in Europe. Bristol itself, with twenty-three Baptist churches, was a stronghold of religious non-conformism in England.

On his return to Riga in 1928, my father was appointed teacher in the seminary and assistant minister in the seminary church. He became the representative of Latvian Baptists in Europe, traveling to Tallinn, Rome, and Prague to attend congresses and to speak. In 1933 he won a scholarship for further study, this time at Colgate Divinity School in Rochester, New York. After a year there, followed by travels through Depression-ridden America, he returned once more to the seminary in Riga. By now the seminary had its own building, a new construction at 37 Lāčplēša Street, opened in 1934. It had classrooms, a library, a church auditorium, and apartments for its ministerial and teaching staff. My father moved into apartment 3. Two years later a pretty young girl from Jelgava began attending the Sunday services and youth program at the seminary church. Her smile was radiant. My father was smitten. On July 18, 1937, he married Biruta Vajeiks, and she joined him in the small apartment. He was thirty-eight, she nineteen.

All Latvian veterans of the war of independence were entitled to free higher education if they qualified academically. On his return from America, my father had enrolled in a part-time postgraduate

program in classics at the Latvian University in Riga. His responsibilities in the church were considerable, and since his studies were free and the time he could devote to them limited, he was still in midstream in his doctoral work when the Bolsheviks arrived in 1940.

The new seminary building was Freijs's last great achievement, even though Freijs was no longer active when the new edifice arose. By 1928 he was having occasional difficulty speaking, and some time later he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. In 1930 he withdrew from all responsibilities. Ill and bedridden, he would nevertheless survive the horrors to come, living until 1950.

On June 13, 1941, the cattle cars arrived in train stations throughout Latvia. That night whole families were arrested, stuffed into those cars, and shipped east. Teachers, students, clergymen, civil servants, military officers – all 'antisocial' and 'counterrevolutionary' citizens were to be resettled, the Politburo had decided in May. These hostile elements included members of Rotary clubs and Esperanto societies, amateur radio operators and stamp collectors – and the head of the Latvian Boy Scouts. Some fifteen thousand arrests in one night. These victims, too, disappeared, for the most part without trace into the vast expanse of Siberia and of the Arctic tundra. 'Clergymen' was one of the categories slated for *déportation*. My father had taken a job as a library clerk. He never thought his 'reassignment' would work. He expected arrest. That he had fought against the Bolsheviks in the civil war two decades earlier would be another serious charge against him. Yet that night they didn't come for him. He wondered why.

In November 1995 the Commission for the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repression, chaired by Alexander Yakovlev, presented a report that concluded that all told, two hundred thousand clergy had been slain under Soviet rule. 'Documents relate,' stated Yakovlev, 'how clergymen, monks, and nuns were crucified on royal gates and shot in the basements of the Cheka, scalped, strangled, drowned, and submitted to other bestial tortures'. Of forty-eight thousand churches in Russia before the Bolshevik revolution, seven thousand remained by 1969.

Between thirty-five and forty thousand Latvians were murdered or deported by the Soviets during the occupation of 1940–41, most of them on June 14, 1941. Around four thousand of the victims were children or adolescents under the age of sixteen. Plans were under way for more deportations in July. Our family may have figured in the new lists.

These plans were aborted by the German invasion.

Julija Šukys

## Trans-Siberia: Like Birds Returning Home

### An Essay

I've recently changed the bedtime songs I sing to my son. We start out with one about a spider, move on to the 'Julija Song,' as he calls it (it's the only song I know with a version of my name in it, apart from John Lennon's), and finally I sing 'The Bird Song.'

Like birds returning home  
Lead them too, oh Lord.  
From the sad roads of exile,  
Gather them up.

I learned this song at summer camp as a child. Every night before sending us off to bed, the nuns who ran our camp would bring us into a circle where we sang and swayed to its slow, sweet melody. But it was years before I really listened to the words, and understood that the song wasn't about birds at all. Conceived by my grandmother's generation about the place it fled or from which it was forcibly removed, the song is about homecoming. Though so many who sang its words never made it home.

Some died on the steppes of Siberia, and others in bombings as they moved westward. My paternal grandfather never again saw his birthplace after he left it in 1944, fleeing west with his three children, my father the youngest among them. He died in exile in 1986. My grandmother (his wife) returned home to Lithuania in 1958, seventeen years after she was deported. But what is home without family, I wonder.

By the time she was the age at which I got married, my paternal grandmother, Ona, had two daughters and a son on the way. And by the time she was as old as I am now, she had lost them.

Now, when I sing 'The Bird Song' to my little boy every night, I think of my grandmother and his great-grandmother, and how she longed for home. And as I breathe in his soft hair that, even now, four years after his birth, still smells like a baby's, I chase away the pinch of pain that comes when I think about how she must have ached for her children.

I never knew my grandmother all that well. The youngest of her five grandchildren, I resided more than an hour away from the southern Ontario town she'd lived in from the late 1960s. I saw her at family gatherings, and can only remember once spending the night on the Murphy bed in her apartment. By the time I was an adolescent, Močiutė had begun to suffer from dementia. She started telling the same stories over and over: how she'd been so embarrassed by her height as a young girl that she tried to look shorter as she walked down the church aisle for communion by exaggeratedly bending her knees with each step, and how her cat wouldn't come down from the roof the day she left her house in Siberia. Of the handful of stories that Močiutė told and retold, the image I remember best is one used by all storytellers who want to illustrate extreme cold, including Jack London. There were days in Siberia, my grandmother used to say, that were so cold that if you spat in the air, saliva froze before it hit the ground. A writer friend of mine claims to have tried this at minus fifty degrees in South Dakota. He said it didn't work, and that London made the detail up. I wonder what Močiutė would say to that.

As a girl, I knew that she'd lived an extraordinary life, but something prevented me from asking too many questions. Our gatherings tended to be formal, with elaborate meals and adult conversation, so probing my grandmother's experiences in Siberia struck me as somehow inappropriate or even rude. By the time I was in my late teens and ready to ask, Močiutė was no longer capable of answering. She'd become lost inside her head, and could no longer keep track of time or place. My grandfather died before this happened to his wife, and, in his absence, family conflicts arose around her care. In the end, she left St. Catharines and spent her final days in a Kitchener nursing home, near my Aunt Birutė's home. When they walked the halls together, my grandmother, who never learned to speak English, would gesture to nurses and other residents, saying 'tell them I was in Siberia.'

She died one week before her second daughter, Joana, and outlived her youngest child, my father, by four years.

I was eighteen when my father died very suddenly of a heart attack. He was a strong, apparently healthy, athletic man, who watched what he ate, didn't drink to excess, and didn't smoke. Yet, at the age of fifty-six, a heart attack felled him. At the time, the only way for me to explain it to myself was to reason that the trauma of losing his mother so young was somehow behind his premature death.

My most vivid memory of his funeral is of sitting next to my grandmother holding her hand as she cried. Every ten minutes or so, she would turn to me, saying, "Tell me, whose funeral is this?" Again and again, I had to deliver the news that her son had died. And each time, sorrow and shock hit her with equal force.

A few years after my father, his sister Joana died suddenly of cancer. Her death served to feed my theory further of how my grandmother's exile had wounded her children.

The idea of trying to find Brovka, the Siberian village where Močiutė lived and worked for seventeen years, came to me when my son was born. Something about becoming a mother planted a seed of desire to see the place of my grandmother's exile.

Before I started tracking her life there, I had only seen one photograph of my grandmother from Siberia. Taken in 1956, the image shows Močiutė standing before a white curtain, with one hand bent behind her back and the other down at her side. She wears a dark polka-dotted dress, thick tights and mannish laced shoes. Her hair is pulled back, as if in a bun or ponytail, and her dress has a smart white collar. I know from her letters that she never wore dresses like this. If women wore dresses on the farms of Siberia, they usually put trousers on underneath them, if not against the cold, then to protect them from insects. But it's her face that is really interesting to me. She's sunburned, maybe from haying or from walking in fields with grazing calves. Between tending animals, cultivating her vegetable garden, chopping wood, and carrying water, she must have spent most of every day outside. Her left eye squints with the slightest smile, and more than anything, I can't believe how much of my father I see in her face.

My grandmother came from a village in the Zonavykai region of Lithuania. It's a rural area in the southwestern corner of the country, and flat, even by Baltic standards. In 1927, Ona Endriukaitytė married Antanas Šukys, and moved to his farm. Once the 1930s' farm crisis hit and crop prices plummeted, my grandparents had to abandon agriculture





Ona Šukienė  
in Siberia, 1956

for a life in the city, where my grandfather worked as a police officer, border guard, and customs agent.

Soon into the marriage, they had two daughters and a son. They moved around a lot, losing jobs and homes as the country changed hands, from the native so-called mild dictator (President Smetona, who jailed leftists and outlawed Catholic student groups) to occupier (Germans along the Baltic coast in 1939) to occupier (Soviets in 1940). They were in the process of moving once more, when on June 13, 1941, my grandmother's sister arrived to take the children to their grandparents' village, located four kilometres from East Prussia, German territory, and therefore in a restricted zone. My grandmother, no longer an official village resident, wasn't allowed there, but she sent her children who were still permitted to move about freely. Meanwhile, she stayed in Kaunas to await her husband. She was alone when the Red Army soldiers arrived in the night.

They gave her two hours to pack. Among the items she took was my grandfather's suit made of fine English wool. He would join her at the station, the soldiers told her. After all, he, a known and decorated anti-Bolshevik, was the one they wanted. His was the name on the list of enemies of the people. But in the end, they only got her, and it was she who wore the English suit in the mud and snow on the fields of central Russia.

When they took her, my father, Algirdas, was six years old. His sister Joana was ten. Birutė was twelve.

Of my entire family, my cousin Darius, Joana's youngest child, is the only one who doesn't tell me I'm crazy for wanting to find Brovka. 'Can you even *go* there?' asks Darius's sister. And she is not alone in her initial reaction. There are worries about food, safety, the harsh climate, and recent environmental disasters. Again and again, I hear 'You can't go *there*!' Until, finally, tickets booked and contacts made, I show that I can.

Only once Darius agrees to travel with me does everyone breathe a sigh of relief, reassured that I will accompanied by a man close to six-and-a-half feet tall.

His height will turn out to have an advantage besides sheer intimidation: on the train platforms where we get out to stretch our legs on the way to Tomsk, I will never lose track of my cousin. He stands at least a full head above everyone else, and I will always easily find his platinum blond hair bobbing above the fray. Both men and women turn as he passes, catching a second glance at the tall, lean stranger striding past. At each stop, the scene will strike me as so comical that I'll snap photograph after photograph.

We decide to meet in Lithuania (he flies in from San Francisco, I from Montreal), and start our journey from Kaunas by train, just as our grandmother did. Though her trip took more than two weeks, Darius and I will travel only four days.

But before boarding the train to Siberia, we want to find Butviliškiai, the homestead where my father and his sisters spent their childhoods, where our grandmother was born, and where her children remained safe when the soldiers came.

I fight jetlag as we drive past field after field, looking for the river that ran alongside the family farm. Aunt Birutė accompanies us, and she's beginning to despair of ever finding it. Old roads have been ploughed over, new ones lain, and few traces of former landmarks remain. Darius and I are ready to throw in the towel, but in a last-ditch effort, we venture down an almost non-existent driveway to the area's one oldish-looking house.

Its porch is littered with chainsaws, table saws, and wrenches. And while at first glance it looks uninhabited, the door is open, and clean pots hang outside on the fence beside an old but rust-free Minsk bicycle. We knock and call out tentatively until a man in his sixties appears

on the threshold. He's toothless, shirtless, and wearing track pants held up by suspenders. At first, I think he's drunk, but as we begin to chat, I decide he's sober, and that we probably just woke him up.

We've found the Kirvelaitynas – the Kirvelaitis family homestead.

This excites Aunt Birutė.

It turns out she remembers coming to this house, carrying messages as a child. Before the war, she tells us, news circulated on a single paper that went from house to house. Each family would pass it on to the next, in the manner that embers used to be carried on the American frontier. As a girl, she was often bored on the farm, and jumped at the opportunity to get out and do something. And at least once, as it turns out, she came here.

Juozas Kirvelaitis leans in the doorway as he listens to our story and answers our questions. The more he talks, the more we recognize our grandmother's lilting speech patterns: silence-filling expressions like 'na-ja' and 'ką jau' that, of everyone in the family, she was the only one to use. None of the old homesteads are left, Kirvelaitis confirms, gesturing toward a field where he tells us Butviliškiai used to stand. The land all around now belongs to a single farmer.

Having lost his wife seven years ago, Kirvelaitis now lives alone, his house – a museum piece. Though there is electricity, it has no running water. Daylight filters in through gaps in the roof tiled with shingles produced in the 1940s, and a small tree grows up through the floorboards of an adjacent room. The last of his people, he was born in this house. When he dies, it will likely be destroyed.

In the hallway stands his wife's gravestone. Since he travels only by bicycle and public minibus, he explains that he hasn't yet been able to bring the stone to the cemetery. I nod, but wonder if there aren't other reasons too.

Both Darius and I bring copious amounts of reading material onto the train, anticipating boredom and long yawning hours. This turns out not to be the case. Our time passes easily, and I find myself gripped by my cousin's stories about the grandmother he knew so much better than I.

Darius has a tactile memory. Unlike me, he is able to describe how Močiutė felt to the touch, how she moved, how she smelled. The first thing he stresses is how big she was. Both she and our grandfather, Darius says, were tall and broad, each with large feet. Tėtukas had huge hairy hands and a bald head that he shaved with an ivory-handled straight razor.

On Sunday mornings, Darius used to pile into the back seat of the car with his grandparents, who rose gently as they drove over bumps and slumped to one side in unison when the car turned a corner. He mimes the action, bobbing his head for emphasis, and I can't help but laugh.

He describes how Saturday mornings, after spending the night in her apartment, he used to run to Močiutė's room, and climb under her covers to cuddle. It was the only time she felt soft, he said. Her huge breasts fell to one side and her belly to the other (one day on the train platform he points to a woman, saying "There, Močiutė had boobs like that"). At other times, Močiutė felt hard because of the corset she wore to support her bad back. When he says this, I realize that this was the only version of her body I ever knew.

When we don't talk, I study the Russian landscape whizzing by. As Lithuania retreats ever westward, birch stands and pine forests periodically give way to swamps, then to a rolling landscape dotted with scrubby brush. We ride past villagers tending their kitchen gardens of cabbages, beans, and potatoes. Darius, who lives among redwoods, marvels at the small and spindly trees. Occasionally, trains stacked with logs pass us with a rumble. Even if not directly on our route, there are tall trees here. To the north of us, the world's largest forest, the taiga, runs across Siberia.

Before turning out the light on our second night of travel, Darius reads me a passage about how gulag prisoners sent out to cut trees died in huge numbers. Logging, he explains, amounted to a quasi-death-sentence, and it was Močiutė's first job in Siberia.

As I lie on my berth, listening to the wheels rumbling against the rails, I calculate that when she made this very trip by cattle car, Močiutė was thirty-six, a year younger than I am now.

We don't follow our grandmother's route exactly. Whereas our train cuts straight across Russia, from Moscow to Tomsk, my grandmother's made an unexplained detour south to the Altai region. Her first stop was at Kupin, just over halfway between Kaunas and Brovka, where she and her companions spent twelve days.

When Močiutė finally got off the train, she felt the earth running beneath her feet, propelling her onward, so stiff and cramped were her legs. She had spent the entire journey crouched in a corner, sandwiched between a woman with a baby and a priest. Only when the priest rolled over, could she do the same.

Kupin was a poor village of mud huts. The Ukrainian exiles who lived there made fuel of tamped-down manure and straw, since the treeless steppes all around offered nothing to burn. The village livestock, like the people themselves, had grown skinny as fence posts during the long drought afflicting the region. There were almost no horses, and only a single herd of cows that were so thin, they resembled goats.

When first brought there, my grandmother and her fellow exiles slept in the school house, the village's only wooden building, collapsing from exhaustion on top of whatever they had brought. While they were still sleeping the next morning, women exiled from their homeland a decade earlier (Stalin deported 300,000 Ukrainians to Siberia in the 1930s, then systematically starved to death millions of villagers left behind) arrived with milk, onions, and cheese. Amidst the terror, or perhaps by way of resisting it: miraculous glimmers of kindness.

After twelve days of work, a foreman came to collect the new arrivals. Močiutė was still out in the fields, when a truck arrived to take her workers' group back to the station. Had they stayed in Kupin, she maintained, they wouldn't have survived their first winter.

For another two days and nights, they travelled to Novosibirsk, stopping at a dock just before dawn. For hours, the train was pushed and pulled, until it was in position for loading onto a barge that would take them up the wide and slow-moving River Ob. Three barges were hooked together, and once aboard, the exiles – Bessarabians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians – could walk the length of all three. It took them first to Krivosheino, where my grandmother and six other Lithuanians were selected to work on a collective farm in Brovka.

Before starting out on our trip, I'd read warnings about the *provodnitsa*, the Russian train hostess who keeps an eye on the goings-on in her car. Each car has one, and ours sports a cloud of burgundy-tinted hair, a colour immensely popular among middle-aged women in Russia and Belarus. By our third day on the train, I rig a portable camping shower in its tiny bathroom to wash my matted locks, but note with curiosity that our *provodnitsa's* look exactly the same as they did the day we boarded. She is very short, very stout, and, despite warnings to the contrary, has a surprisingly warm disposition.

The main thing is that she likes order and takes her job very seriously. She locks our cabin door when we get off and offers to bring us mineral water to drink. She vacuums daily and is constantly bending over to

tidy the long, thin piece of linen that covers the hall carpet. It's like a long dish towel that prevents the actual rug from getting stepped on – a redundancy that strikes me as both crazy and sweet.

On our third day of travel, as Darius and I wait to get off the train in hope of finding some ice cream to buy on the platform, I ask the *provodnitsa*, who I notice has changed into a roomy flowery dress, if her day is over. No, she says, she is going all the way to Tomsk, where she lives, then inquires about us. Are we also going to the end of the line?

'Yes,' I reply, 'We're headed to a place near Tomsk where our grandmother lived for seventeen years. Brovka, near the River Ob.'

Though I haven't used the word 'exile,' the *provodnitsa's* face falls, and she becomes uncomfortable, as if I'd told her that we were going to visit the site of a family member's murder. Then she says something about her own family (her mother, perhaps?) who was also deported or imprisoned (I understand the word *lager*, camp, but have a hard time following with my meagre Russian skills). I don't know what else to say, so we stand silently, looking out the door window, waiting to come to a stop.

During the twelve days they spent in Kupin, the new exiles learned of a local factory that made Siberian felt boots. Everyone who could, bought a pair. You put them on at the first sign of winter, my grandmother said, and they didn't come off for six months. The boots were as thick as your finger and went up to your knees, so to wear them was like walking with stumps. Brovka's workers never received any clothes from the farm, but wore whatever they had brought. And since they weren't allowed to buy anything, except bread (but only from July until the New Year) and a half-litre of milk at a time, those boots Močiutė bought in Kupin certainly protected her health, and may have saved her life.

Siberia's growing season lasts but a few short months, though crops grow quickly in the long northern days. It was all the workers of the collective farm could do to harvest their grain during the summer. The farm postponed threshing to winter, after fieldwork was done. I know from my grandmother's letters that eventually combine harvesters came to be used in Brovka (a metal pole flew off of one such machine and knocked my grandmother's teeth out), but during those first few winters, humans and horses powered the threshers.

First, they had to separate the straw from the grain, a task that took all day. At night, they would separate wheat from chaff. This

was a three-person job: one poured the grain, a second turned the machine, and a third collected the separated kernels. My grandmother did this work four kilometres from her house, often arriving to find the wheat frozen and covered in snow. To keep warm, the workers burned straw. And when they took a break they burrowed into the piles of chaff, where it was so warm that they found it hard to stay awake.

Brovka and Bielastok (its neighbouring village, christened for the Polish city of the same name) are far closer to Tomsk than I imagine. The trip takes around two hours from the city, up a surprisingly modern highway. There is bridge work over the River Ob, which looks nothing like the Canadian rivers I grew up with. There are no large rocks, no scrub on its banks. Men fish along its edge, and I wonder how toxic the water is. I know a nuclear accident happened here almost two decades ago. It was the main argument my husband used to try and sway me from making the trip.

At home, several months after returning from Siberia, I will read a scientific article describing contamination levels in the Ob. Much of the analysis eludes me, but I learn that the river contains alarming levels of radioactive isotopes (plutonium and neptunium) from pre-1963 nuclear arms testing and from later underground tests conducted at weapons plants located on the river's tributaries. Arms' production began in the region in 1949, and the study describes inadequate storage conditions for nuclear waste, a situation that reached its crisis point in 1993 when a waste tank exploded at the then-secret installation called Tomsk-7.

As we approached the Ob, I can make out Tomsk-7's cooling towers in the distance. When I ask about the accident, everyone in the car laughs, telling me it was no big deal, just a radioactive cloud. (My husband later rightly points out that this levity is probably a survival strategy. After all, what choice do Tomsk residents have but to be cavalier?) The formerly secret city of Tomsk-7, named for its postal code, is now called Seversk. Though the plant no longer functions, the gated community surrounding it remains a restricted zone. Official authorization is still required to enter it. Residents, I am told, are in no hurry to change their city's status, and want to continue to enjoy the low crime rate the security perimeter affords. 'Nobody locks their cars there,' says our guide Vasily with a smile, 'and they don't want to start'.

Luckily, in addition to its weapons plants, Tomsk is also home to Siberia's premier cancer research institute. And while the Tomsk region

looks clean and clear, both Darius and I develop sore throats immediately upon arrival in Tomsk, then skin rashes a few days before we leave.

Other things remind us that we're in Siberia too: there are no shocks in the van we ride in, so every bump and crack in the road causes our bones to rattle. Drivers hurry to overtake one another when there's no reason (the road is full, so passing one car barely advances things) and no room to do so. We witness several near misses.

We take a ninety-degree turn at the sign for Bielaŭstok, and bump down a winding road, past a pond that our guide Vasily tells us the locals jokingly call Lake Baikal. We see two shirtless boys walking down the road to take a swim. The sun is setting, and by the time we arrive, it is dark.

With its small blue-shuttered houses, Bielaŭstok looks like the villages we rode past in the train. There is one main road that passes through it. It is paved, with puddles at its edges. Vasily takes us across the way to his father's place.

After months of planning and years of thinking about it, we have made it.

Whenever I talk with Vasily, I insist on calling the place Močiutė lived 'Brovka,' as she referred to it in her letters. But Vasily wants to correct me, and always says 'Bielaŭstok,' where he was born and raised. For a long time the communities were distinct. They sat on opposite banks of the tiny River Brovka. Of the two, only Bielaŭstok remains. There is no trace of Brovka: all you see when you look across the river is a green embankment.

In the late nineteenth century, Poles moved voluntarily to Siberia as part of Russian land reform and founded the village of Bielaŭstok. They arrived to find insect-infested marshland, and survived only through heroic efforts. Today, linguists travel to Siberia's Bielaŭstok to study the village's hybrid dialect. Močiutė described it as a mix of Polish and Russian. She herself learned to speak not standard Russian, but Belarusian, the language of the villagers who lived across the river from Bielaŭstok.

It wasn't until several decades after the Poles arrived that Belarusians fleeing famine founded Brovka. They arrived in 1920, having been granted land by Soviet authorities. The new arrivals were even poorer and more ragged than the villagers of Bielaŭstok, who called them 'shlep-shoes,' in imitation of the sound their birch-bark footwear made when they walked. The Bielaŭstokers did not receive the Belarusians with open arms, and resented these new arrivals for sponging off their decades-long effort



to render the land arable. There were conflicts. Even children touselled in fistfights and hurled insults at one another across the River Brovka.

As we piece this story together, Darius and I begin to make sense of part of Močiutė's tale that we'd never really understood. She had told us that she felt more accepted by the Orthodox Belarusians (in Brovka) than by the Catholic Poles (in Bielastok), with whom, culturally speaking, she should have had more in common. Perhaps this is why she always called the place she lived 'Brovka,' even when she lived in Bielastok – as a nod to the villagers who took her in. But the story of tension between two communities now sheds light. I suspect that the villagers of Bielastok may have been less than welcoming to the forced exiles because, just as the Belarusians arrived to the relatively cushy environment that they had created, here now was a trainload of others. Močiutė's impression of rejection wasn't personal, it was simply a manifestation of local culture.

The two communities lived side by side until the last house in Brovka was demolished in 1990. Any animosities appear to have disappeared, because when I asked Vasily what happened to Brovka's last inhabitants, he shrugged and replied that they moved to Bielastok.

But Bielastok is dying. This is undeniable. It is a village of old women, widows for the most part. The youth are leaving, especially young men. It's no longer possible to live or raise a family on the wages paid at the farm, so everyone moves on.

Buses used to run here three times a day, but service has dwindled to three times a week. Children are present only during summer holidays, when they come from the city to visit their grandparents. The kids we meet glow with happiness and curiosity. Darius and I watch in amazement as five-year-old Vanya rides up and down the village's main drag on a gigantic horse at least four times his height. (Inevitably, late in the day, the horse spooks, and the boy falls.) When their grandparents die, will these children have any reason to come to Bielastok? There are now only forty-two children in the local school, and its administration needs to lobby hard to keep it open, arguing for the benefits of the distinct Polish cultural and linguistic education it offers. The next day, when we go from house to house making inquiries, I wonder if we are meeting the village's last inhabitants.

Our accommodations are smoky and sweltering. Vasily's father, Anton Vasilevich, pirates heat from the natural gas supplier, and dares not turn it

off (ever), for fear that his free flow will be detected and terminated. The windows have no screens, and must remain closed against swarms of insects, so between the cigarettes, heat, and presence of a cat, Darius's allergies are out of control. Red-eyed, congested and sneezing, he cries in outrage at villagers' stories of forced labour, taxation, starvation, and murder. Though I don't say it, I wonder if it isn't somehow apt that this place is literally making him sick.

Born and raised in Bielsztok, Vasily is descended from Poles who arrived in 1891. A widower for several years now, Anton Vasilevich lives alone in the house that his two sons helped him build in 1970. 'It was easy then,' he says, 'you could borrow heavy equipment from the collective farm'. Vasily tells us his father spent seven years in the gulag: six for stealing food, and one more for buying home brew on the black market.

Anton Vasilevich wanders around the house wearing a tightly belted coat. He smokes day and night, blares the television, drinks beer for breakfast, and vodka at all other times. He tells stories with a glint in his eye that makes him look far younger than his eighty years. Vasily admits to worrying about his father, saying he eats badly and no longer bathes because his sauna in the yard is falling apart and Anton Vasilevich gets cold from the holes in the roof.

Vasily treats his father like a living museum. He records everything he says, surreptitiously pulling out a digital device during our conversations. And he looks at his father with a tenderness and love that I've rarely seen in the eyes of an adult man. I like the way this father and son interact: the quiet reverence the son has for the father, and the pride both take in the elder's boisterous life.

Anton Vasilevich, I feel certain, is the last of his kind. He is an anomaly: an old man in a village of women. Močiutė's Siberia too was a world of women because of war and purges. In 1937, the NKVD gathered Bielsztok's men and shot all but twenty. 1937 and 1938 mark the years of Stalin's Great Terror, when over 70,000 people were shot to death in the so-called kulak operation, and another quarter million on ethnic grounds. The citizens of the Siberian village of Bielsztok had the misfortune of being Poles in Stalin's USSR. And the mere fact of who they were was cause enough for a death sentence.

On our second day in the village, Vasily takes us to see the monument whose construction he initiated by the crumbling and abandoned community centre. Half of the inscribed names belong to NKVD victims from 1937. These are faded and barely legible. The other half belong to the Second World War Dead. Once the boys spared in the 1937 massacre grew up, they

were taken to war, and died on battlefields and in German POW camps. Their names, also inscribed in black stone, are much easier to read. Those who survived the camps and battlefields went to work the coal and uranium mines that finally finished them off. There is no monument to them.

But today's Siberia is a world of women because drinking kills men prematurely. Alcohol-related mortality (including accidental and violent death, alcohol poisoning, and diseases of the heart, liver, pancreas, and aerodigestive tract) reached its height in 1994. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, alcohol was responsible for about three quarters of male deaths in Siberia, and the life expectancy of Russian men is sixty: seven years below the global median for males, and thirteen years below that for Russian women.

Before we arrived, Vasily warned me to spend no more than two days in Brovka. Too lazy to struggle with dictionaries, I ran his Russian email through an internet translator, whose result struck me as funny in its formal tone and exactitude: 'At this time of year,' it read, 'the large numbers of blood-sucking flies can be trying for the uninitiated'.

Močiutė told Darius stories of how she used to tie up the cuffs of the woolen suit jacket with rags as protection against insects before sitting down to write letters, but she couldn't prevent them from biting a bracelet-like ring around her wrist. The smoke she used to keep them out of the house made it impossible to see or breathe, but without smoke, mosquitoes made it impossible to live.

Since she left this place, Brovka's marshland has been drained, and there are fewer mosquitoes. The river that once separated the feuding villages has been reduced to a mere trickle, and in some places, to a dry bed.

While fewer insects certainly make life easier for Anton Vasilevich and the other villagers, the draining of marshlands is in large part responsible for forest fires that burn across Eastern Russia in the summer of 2010. Winds carry smoke westward, choking Muscovites in their metropolis.

Russia's government laments the blazes as a 'natural disaster,' but they are nothing of the sort. In fact, the fires are the result of a systematic mismanagement of land: wetlands drained and mined for peat, mammoth territories handed over to private corporations, and the country's forestry ministry reduced to a skeleton staff of twelve individuals so swamped with paperwork they can no longer patrol the forests for which they are responsible.

On our first full day in Bielastok, we meet Nina who lived in my grandmother's house as a young woman. She explains that her home was far from the farm, where she had to arrive early to milk cows. My grandmother lived very close to their workplace, in a log house just across the road, so she offered Nina a place to sleep.

Nina doesn't remember much about Močiutė's children, but when I ask her about Agnieszka, my grandmother's cow, she laughs and nods. 'Yes, she was black and white.' Soon, details that I didn't know before surface: for example, she remembers Močiutė's farewell party before she finally left Siberia, and tells us she travelled to Krivosheino by horse and cart, then from there to Tomsk by steam ship down the River Ob, adding 'It was sad to see her go'. Since Nina does not know how to read or write, they exchanged no letters.

I pull out several photographs, trying to jog more memories. Nina apologizes for her poor eyesight as she flips through the pictures, predicting she will be of little help, but after an instant, she pauses at an image, saying, 'This one looks familiar'.

The photograph shows my grandmother and her sister Margarita (deported to Siberia in 1948, during the partisan wars in Lithuania) sitting on a bench by their house. They are reading a letter. Močiutė is wearing Margarita's late husband's glasses, and the two women wear matching plaid shirts, made from fabric my aunts sent in care packages. A few minutes later we understand why she recognizes the image.

Above my head in the kitchen hangs a picture frame filled with black and white photographs. We have seen similar collages in every house we've visited so far. Often these frames hang well above eye level, and are decorated with white paper doilies. In order to give Nina some space to look at the photos without pressure, or just trying to take everything in, I glance up at a frame above my head. Toward its bottom I find a copy of the very same photograph of my grandmother and Margarita in plaid shirts that Nina has recognized. With yelps of surprise and excitement, Darius and I jump up to examine all the frames in the house carefully, looking for more traces of our family. It isn't long before we find one: in the next room, there's a snapshot taken in 1957 at Darius's parents' first house in Canada that shows Birutė, Darius's sister, his mother, his father, and my father.

The discovery makes me indescribably happy: it is the first concrete evidence that Močiutė was here, the first thing outside of stories that establishes a link between our family and this place. I find myself deeply



Ona Šukienė (right) and her sister,  
Margarita Riaubienė. Siberia, ca. 1957.

moved by the knowledge that she is remembered and respected enough for her family's photograph to be archived in a home here. 'Yes,' say all the villagers we meet, 'I remember Auntie Anya' (as they called her). 'She was a good worker and a kind person'.

It is late in the day by the time we start making our way down to the end of the village, where the paved road ends. We follow Evdonia Vasilevna Bielyaskaya, or 'Dusya,' down the winding dirt road and back up the hill to where the farm still stands. The building is new, but occupies the same spot as it used to when Močiutė raised calves there. It is our second meeting with Dusya today. We knocked on her door this morning to show her a photograph of Močiutė and ask if she remembered her. Yes, she confirmed with a smile. Dusya was the house's second owner after Močiutė, and when I asked her to describe it, she told me it had consisted of one room (not two, as I had imagined), an iron stove, and unpainted wooden floors (not earthen, as I'd believed). The collective farm demolished the house after it announced plans to build a new calving facility on the same plot. It was never constructed, and no trace of the house remains.



Ona Šukienė (right) and her sister, Margarita Riaubienė, by their Bielastok house and garden. Siberia, ca. 1957.

When we find the site, Vasily is triumphant. 'What did I tell you?' he exclaims, 'This is Bielastok!'

Darius and I photograph the site from all angles, taking care to get the stand of trees in the distance, where, Dusya tells us, Močiutė kept her garden. Before turning back, I pick up three stones: two mottled white and grey, one black. I can hold all three in my palm at once.

Even with fewer insects than our grandmother had to contend with, by the time we make it back to Anton Vasilevich's, Darius has had enough. Large black flies buzz around our faces most of the time we are outside, and this man (my 'strong oak,' as our grandmother would have called him) who has accompanied me halfway around the world, is tired of swatting. He flat-out refuses to walk down the road and over to the ridge where Močiutė lived for her first years in exile, before she built the house by the farm. So, it's just Vasily and me.

The ground is muddy, and I hop around and over puddles, wading through the tall grasses that hug the side of a hill. Wary of ticks, I have tucked my pant legs into my socks, as the travel clinic nurse instructed. By contrast, Vasily whips off his shoes, rolls up his pants and squishes his way down the road past an abandoned car and a nervous, harassed horse.



The author by the ridge where the village of Brovka once stood, Siberia, 2010.

It is the first time Vasily and I have really been alone. He speaks to me normally, as if I were fluent in Russian. Strangely, I understand the elderly villagers' language far more easily. I figure I only get about forty per cent of what Vasily says. It's awkward. There's a lot of smiling and gesturing.

We don't make it all the way – the mud is simply too deep – but I photograph Močiutė's ridge from a better vantage point, and get a sense of this land that was once her back yard.

In July 1958, my grandmother started making plans to return home to Lithuania. Nothing particularly dramatic happened. No fanfare, explanation, or official apology. Just news that she was free to leave Siberia if she wanted. She could also stay. It was up to her.

It turned out that there had never been any charges against my grandmother. She never received any document outlining her crime, or pardoning it. When asked why she'd been exiled, my grandmother could give no answer. The collective farm's foreman (whom Močiutė liked very much) once asked, and all she could do was turn the question gently back to him. 'You tell me,' she said. 'Perhaps you have some evidence against me? What did I do? I don't feel guilty of anything'.

She went home to Lithuania in October of 1958, after finishing up with the garden, harvesting and selling her potatoes, and finding a new owner for her beloved Agnieszka.

Seven more years passed before Močiutė reunited with her children in 1965. Returning deportees were long stigmatized in Lithuania, and though my grandmother, already beyond Soviet retirement age, no longer needed to work, she had scant resources, and was reduced to selling the scarves and stockings that her daughters sent to make ends meet. Every day for seven years, she prayed at the Kaunas Cathedral, a few minutes' walk from where she lived with the mother of her son-in-law, whom she'd never met. Frustrated at getting nowhere with authorities in her attempts to gain permission to leave the USSR, she finally made her way to Moscow, where a former Brovka resident and now Party official helped open influential doors.

One night in 1965, while eating dinner with his new wife at his Toronto home, my father received a call from Canadian Embassy officials. His mother was on a plane to Canada, and would be arriving in a matter of hours.

None of the accounts of how that first meeting went are very detailed. Aunt Birutė describes a great deal of confusion: my grandmother missed her connection in Montreal, and the scramble to find her seems to have dulled other emotions. My cousin Viltė, then a young girl, told me she was struck most by our grandmother's odour: 'She smelled like Russia'. Močiutė had been carrying a sausage in her purse, nibbling at it as she progressed on her multi-day journey from Kaunas to Vilnius to Moscow and over the Atlantic. A nub remained, and its sweaty, meaty scent overpowered her granddaughter.

I do not know how Močiutė felt when she arrived in Canada, or even how she behaved. The one clue is a sentence I found in a long interview she gave in 1977. It broke my heart.

On her way back to Lithuania from Brovka, my grandmother stopped in Moscow for a day to visit a Siberian-born girl named Tanya, whom she loved in part because the girl reminded her of Birutė. The girl had married well and moved to the capital with her new husband. When Močiutė arrived in Moscow, Tanya greeted her at the train station and took her home to a meal of roast chicken, cognac and cakes. 'It was like coming home to family,' she told her interviewer. 'We were so happy, we cried. I felt more at home with those Siberian Muscovites than I did with my own children. When I met my children after so many years, we were strangers.'

My grandfather came to Canada by ship from England, a year after Močiutė's arrival. He never believed that the Soviet authorities would release his wife, so he refused to sell his house or move until her feet touched



Canadian soil. Once he arrived in 1966, the two of them moved into an apartment together, and resumed their marriage after twenty-five years apart.

How do two people separated for so long return to one another? When I asked, Birutė shook her head and said that she'd never posed the question. They never spoke of such matters. But Darius describes our grandparents as living a peaceful if separate existence, coming together for church, meals, and family events. 'They rarely touched,' he said.

For a long time, I wondered how my grandmother's exile affected her children, especially my father. I believed that the loss of his mother had killed him, and that the wound of deportation had also killed his sister. But now a new question, perhaps as I begin to let go of my own loss and pain, is surfacing. How did exile not kill my grandmother? Or, perhaps, more exactly, how did the reunion not kill her?

In exile, hope sustained her. In her many letters she wrote that, there in Siberia, her children stood in her mind's eye every day. The drive to see them again, to make it over the ocean to touch once again their hands and faces would keep a mother going. Having myself experienced the almost frightening lioness-like stirrings of motherly love and protectiveness, I know this. But how did she not crumble once she reached them? Once she met them, and saw that they were all grown up? When faced with incontrovertible evidence that their lives had passed her by?

In my grandmother's case, the only answer I can think of is Darius.

Whenever he talks about Močiutė, Darius's face lights up. More than anything, he describes her love for him as unflinching and utterly unconditional. Once, he accidentally broke a bottle of homemade elderberry brandy his parents had been keeping for his sister's wedding, and tried to cover his tracks. Catching her son in the lie, Joanna exiled him from the house, telling him in a fury to get out. Darius ran exactly one mile through the snow to our grandmother's apartment wearing only shirtsleeves and the fuzzy pink slippers he'd grabbed on his way out the door, arriving at Močiutė's a cold and panicked mess. Fiercely protective of him, she took him in, warmed him up, fed him, then exchanged sharp words with her daughter. Later that evening, Darius's mild-mannered father arrived to retrieve him.

Darius was the third baby in his family, the result of a pregnancy that surprised his mother, with whom he had a combative

relationship from an early age. The brandy incident was only one of many passionate and heated conflicts that both Darius and his sister told me about. Joana, for her part, was fiery, vivacious, and had boundless energy. A talented designer and seamstress, she created fanciful dresses for me when I was a young girl. Darius too is generous and gregarious. One of his traits I was so grateful for in Siberia was his absolute lack of shyness in the face of strangers. Perhaps they were too much alike: a fiery mother and a fiery son made for an inferno. I suspect he was a bit of an enigma to his mother, but Močiutė loved him just as he was. To her, he was perfect.

In Lithuanian there's a term for a last, unplanned, surprise baby: *pagramdukas*. The word means that little bit of batter that's left in the bowl after you make a batch cookies. You don't think there's enough there for a whole final cookie, but the quantity in the bowl surprises you, and you manage a final biscuit. Darius, I think, wasn't baked for Joana as much as for her mother. He was Močiutė's gift from the universe. Perhaps, even, its way of making amends.

In early adulthood, when Darius finally came out to his family, his relationship with his mother became even more fraught, as if the thing that had troubled her about her son all those years had been named. But naming it didn't help, and Joana found herself without a model or map of how to proceed. Darius moved out of his parents' house while still a teen, and eventually settled in San Francisco, where he has lived with his partner for nearly two decades.

When Joana died, I blamed the wound of exile, but she, casting about for a reason behind her illness, blamed her son.

One evening on the train, I ask Darius if Močiutė, a deeply faithful and devout Catholic, knew he was gay. He shook his head. No, he replied, he'd never told her, but thought that she would have been OK with it. 'She herself was peculiar in her own ways, and didn't judge. She just loved and accepted. Močiutė used to say that the world needed all kinds of people.'

Today, Darius has become the bridge-builder of the family. He organizes events to bring us all together, and mediates when conflicts arise. And, despite the painful experiences of his early adulthood – when, for example, in a misguided attempt to improve family dynamics, a Catholic priest was called in to 'cure' his homosexuality – Darius harbours no discernable resentment or bitterness. In this way, of all of us, he is most like Močiutė. She never spoke of her time in Siberia with anger or accusation,

but stressed the acts of kindness and forces of nature that she witnessed. Like her, Darius seems capable of infinite forgiveness and joy despite pain. The seeds that she planted in him every weekend in his childhood have come to fruition. Močiutė built a new home in Darius, but also for Darius. He was her second chance, and she was his safe place, his home.

*From the sad roads of exile, oh Lord, gather us up.* As I sing to my son (and Darius's godson) I pray for the strength to be as forgiving as Močiutė was, to find joy despite pain, and to build a safe place for my little boy. Like a bird returning home, may he too always find refuge.



## Index of Names

- Abizadeh, Arash 48  
Āboliņa, A. 34  
Abromaitis, J. 58, 84  
Abromavičius, Stanislovas 48, 59  
Abukevičius, Petras 134, 163  
Adamkus, Valdas 12  
Ahonen, Heiki 180, 181, 182, 190, 191,  
192, 203, 204, 206, 208  
Aitmatov, Chingiz 129  
Alexander, Jeffrey C. 72  
Ališauskas, Algirdas 131  
Amundsen, Arne 158  
Anderson, Benedict 179, 208  
Andriukaitis, A. 54  
Anušauskas, Arvydas 15, 48, 50, 142  
Apor, P. 205, 208  
Applebaum, Anne 50, 62, 64, 70, 155  
Aputis, Juozas 117, 129  
Arendt, Hannah 17  
Aronsson, Peter 158, 159  
Arro, Alliki 19  
Ashcroft, Bill 92, 96, 103  
Assman, Jan 158  
Assmann, Aleida 11  
Ašmontas, Adolis 85  
Avižienis, Jūra 20, 94, 96, 99, 103  
Azhaev, V. 67  
Baedeker, F. W. 215  
Baer, Elizabeth R. 137, 151  
Balkelis, Tomas 4, 5, 21, 22, 46, 108  
Ballantyne, R. 204, 209  
Baltakis, Algimantas 120, 131  
Baravykas, Gediminas 168  
Bärenklau, I. 195, 208  
Baron, Nick 14, 15, 16, 45, 122  
Baronas, Jokūbas 52  
Barth, Fredrick 48  
Bartov, Omer 15, 186, 208  
Bashkuev, Vladimir 53, 54, 61  
Bauer, Yehuda 137  
Beleckaitė-Rimkevičienė, Marija 66  
Berg, Helle 150, 187  
Beria, Lavrentii 70  
Bernard-Donals, Michel F. 10, 197  
Bhabha, Homi 22, 92, 97, 98, 103  
Bičiūnaitė, Jūratė 57, 58, 61, 64  
Bielyskaya, Evdonia 233  
Binkis, Gerardas 88  
Bleiere, Daina 15  
Bliūdžiūtė, Petrutė 67  
Boyer, Pascal 142  
Bojarskas, L. 86  
Brandišauskas, Valentinas 63  
Brezhnev, Leonid 115  
Browne, Prince 48  
Browning, Christopher R. 10  
Bubnys, Vytautas 131  
Budreikienė 143  
Budrytė, Dovilė 5, 24, 44, 107, 137,  
178, 187, 208  
Buklienė, Elena 108, 117

- Burauskaitė, Birutė 20, 50  
 Burch, Stuart 158, 159, 205, 208  
 Burinskaitė, Kristina 70, 125  
 Butkevičiūtė 143  
 Butner, R. 53
- Caruth, Cathy 16, 112, 113, 197  
 Ceichners, Alfreds 29, 44  
 Celmiņa, Helēna 43, 44  
 Christie, Kenneth 107  
 Churchill, Winston 15  
 Conrad, Sebastien 11  
 Crew, Spencer R. 204, 208  
 Cribb, Robert 107  
 Czaplicka, John 158
- Čaplikas, Algis 135
- Damašienė, Valerija 77, 89  
 Daujotytė, Viktorija 96, 103, 108, 117, 132–133  
 Dauksts, Jānis 41  
 Davoliūtė, Violeta 4, 5, 56, 107, 108, 138, 153  
 De Beauvoir, Simone 197, 208  
 Dėdinas, Valentinas 84, 85, 87  
 Del Giudice, Luisa 68, 71  
 Derrida, Jacques 202, 208  
 Druvaskalne, Iveta D. 180, 208
- Edkins, Jenny 144, 145  
 Edwards, Brent Hayes 103  
 Eglīte, Sindija 33  
 Ehrenreich, Robert M. 10  
 Eichmann, Adolf 17  
 Eyerman, Ron 72  
 Eksteins, Modris 5, 25, 37, 211  
 Ekšteins, Rūdolfs 213  
 Endriukaitytė, Ona 220  
 Evans, Martin 186, 189
- Felman, Shoshana 16, 112  
 Ferrante, Joan 48  
 Foucault, Michel 128, 188, 195, 207, 208
- Franco, Rosaria 46  
 Freijs, Jānis 215–217  
 Friedländer, Saul 10  
 Frierson, Cathy A. 20
- Gadeikis, Liudvikas 132  
 Gailienė, Danutė 19  
 Garmutė, Antanina 53, 54, 58, 59, 66, 68, 77, 86  
 Gaškaitė-Žemaitienė, Nijolė 73  
 Gattrell, Peter 14, 15, 16, 45, 122  
 Geda, Sigitas 129, 130  
 Gedaitė, Ursulė 25  
 Geks, Dzintra 38, 42, 44  
 Geniušas, Algis 69  
 Geniūšienė, Izolda 93, 103  
 Giesen, Bernard 72  
 Glejzer, Richard R. 10, 197  
 Gluško, Dr. 84  
 Goldenberg, Myrna 137, 151  
 Gorbachev, Mikhail 7, 32, 130  
 Gordon, F. 189, 208  
 Gradén, Lizette 159  
 Granauskas, Romualdas 129, 130  
 Greenberg, Judith 151  
 Griesemer, James R. 158  
 Grigas, Jonas 80  
 Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia 22, 23, 54–59, 61, 62, 67–70, 75, 76, 79, 84, 86, 93–99, 101, 103, 108, 114–121, 128, 132, 133, 138, 153  
 Grockis 79  
 Gross, Jan T. 13, 14, 122  
 Gudonytė, Natalija 138, 140, 141, 144, 147, 152  
 Gugelberger, Georg 113  
 Gundare, Ieva 183, 196  
 Gustainis, Valentinas 111
- Hacking, Ian 159  
 Halbwachs, Maurice 157, 158  
 Hartman, Geoffrey 17  
 Hein, H. 184, 208  
 Henry, Nicola 142

- Hinrikus, Ruth 137, 138  
 Hitler, Adolf 14, 92, 155, 183  
 Hodgkin, Katharine 158  
 Hosking, Geoffrey 109  
 Housden, Matyn 155  
 Huddart, David 103  
  
 Ignatavičius, Egidijus 54  
 Ignatavičius, I. 50, 139  
 Indriūnas, Algimantas 126  
 Iser, Wolfgang 111  
 Ivaškevičius, Marius 56  
 Izdeelis, Augustine 123  
  
 Yakovlev, Alexander 217  
 Young, Glennys 72  
 Young, James E. 157  
 Yudice, George 113  
  
 Jakštaitė-Kurmeliavičienė, Joana 127  
 Janova, Tamara 170  
 Jansons, Edmunds 39  
 Janulevičius, Algirdas 127  
 Jedlowski, Paolo 75  
 Jõe-Cannon, Ilvi 137  
 Jokūbonis, Gediminas 169  
 Jolluck, Kathetine R. 4, 5, 9, 20, 47,  
 74–76, 79  
 Juozaitis, Arvydas 130  
 Jurgelis, Jurgis 150  
 Jurksaitis, Juozas 81, 83, 84, 87  
 Juškaitė, Aušra 69  
  
 Kalniete, Sandra 36, 37, 44  
 Kalvaitienė, Dr. 85  
 Kangeris, Kārlis 34, 45  
 Kanopkienė, Laima 162  
 Kaplinski, Jaan 198  
 Karatajienė 88  
 Karatajūtė, Matutė 88  
 Kasekamp, Andres 11, 153  
 Kašauskienė, Vanda 154  
 Kašinskas, Virginijus 170  
 Kattago, V. 179, 209  
  
 Kearney, Michael 113  
 Kelam, Tunne 180  
 Kelertas, Violeta 20, 92, 103  
 Kerulis, Leonardas 48, 50, 51  
 Khrushchev, Nikita 31, 43, 125, 128  
 Kimštas-Žalgiris, Jonas 140, 141  
 Kirss, Tina 19, 20, 44, 138  
 Kirvelaitis, Juozas 223  
 Kistler, Olga 180, 181, 208, 209  
 Kitkauskas, Napalys 64, 67, 88  
 Kitzmann, Andreas 157  
 Klāns, Pāvils 29  
 Knaģis, Ilmars 37, 38, 44  
 Knell, Simon J. 158  
 Knight, Amy 70  
 Knoll, Matthias 45  
 Kovalevskis, Pauls 29, 44  
 Kraujelis-Siaubūnas, Antanas 139  
 Kraujelytė, Vitalija 138, 139, 140  
 Krikštanienė 79  
 Krikštanis 85  
 Krivickienė, N. 76  
 Kudaba, Česlovas 131  
 Kuk, Kristi 19  
 Kundera, Milan 109  
 Kuprys, Aleksandras 82, 83  
 Kurtinaitytė, Irena 48, 64, 66, 69  
 Kurvet-Kaosaar, Leena 19, 96, 103  
 Kushner, Tony 17, 187, 197, 209  
 Kutavičius, Bronius 129  
 Kvietkauskas, Mindaugas 25  
  
 Laar, Mart 182, 190, 209  
 LaCapra, Dominic 186, 199, 209  
 Landsbergis, Vytautas 55, 94, 95, 103,  
 107, 155  
 Lane, Thomas 139  
 Langer, Lawrence L. 10  
 Lanzmann, Claude 17  
 Laskevičius, Algirdas 64  
 Latkovskis, Len 31, 44  
 Latout, Bruno 153, 164  
 Laub, Dori 16, 112  
 Lauristin, Marju 19, 20, 138

- Lazda, Mara 44  
 Le Goff, Jacques 158  
 Leinartė, Dalia 5, 21, 72, 74, 108  
 Lenz, Claudia 149, 150  
 Levi, Primo 174  
 Libeskind, Daniel 168  
 Lice, Anda 36, 41, 44  
 Lieven von, Natalie 215  
 Lipkutė-Jofienė, Valerija 89  
 Liss, A. 199, 209  
 Lothe, Jakob 11  
 Lubānietis, Aivars 38  
 Lumans, Valdis 15  
 Lupeikytė, Juzefa 54, 63  
  
 MacQueen, Michael 189, 209  
 Maldonis, Alfonsas 131  
 Malik, Lynda 137  
 Malinauskas, Viliumas 185  
 Mätksoo, Maria 145  
 Marcinkevičius, Algirdas 61, 69  
 Marcinkevičius, Justinas 108–109, 115,  
 117–121, 125, 129–132  
 Maripuu, M. 197, 209  
 Mark, James 155, 205, 209  
 Markauskas, Jonas 161–164  
 Martin, Terry 48, 50, 51  
 Martinaitis, Marcelijus 16, 125, 129,  
 130, 170  
 Martinkus, Vytautas 117  
 Matulevičienė, Saulė 109  
 Matulevičius-Pempė, Vytautas 140  
 Mažeikaitė, Zita 116  
 McDermott, Kevin 34, 45  
 Meri, Lennart 12  
 Merkienė, O. 72, 73, 87  
 Michel, Gundega 182, 186, 189, 191  
 Mickevičiūtė-Bičkauskienė, Birutė 127  
 Mikėnas, Juozas 169  
 Mikutis, Justinas 132  
 Misiunas, Romuald 139  
 Mithander, Conny 157  
 Moore, David 91  
 Morkūnas, Kazys 169  
  
 Morkutė, Genė 85  
 Motičienė, Paulina 58, 59, 61, 89  
  
 Naimark, Norman 14, 15, 16  
 Neiburgs, Uldis 189, 209  
 Nixon, Richard 31  
 Nollendorfs, Valters 45, 182, 183, 189,  
 199, 206, 209  
 Nora, Pierre 158  
  
 Olick, Jeffrey 206, 208  
 Otoij, Adrian 90, 91, 103  
  
 Patackas, Algirdas 131  
 Peegel, Mari 19  
 Peiker, Piret 19  
 Pelkaus, Elmārs 33, 39, 45  
 Pence, Guna 33, 34, 38, 39, 45  
 Pertai, Eva-Clarita 18, 155, 207, 209  
 Pertai, V. 206, 209  
 Piļke Irina 39  
 Piłsudski, Józef 164  
 Plakans, Andrejs 11, 14  
 Pleznere-Eglīte, Benita 38, 39, 45  
 Puhvel, Madli 19  
 Pukelis, Kęstutis 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 85, 86,  
 87, 88  
 Puodžiuvienė, K. 80, 85  
 Purs, Aldis 5, 21, 29, 34, 39, 45, 139  
 Putvis, Rymantas 161  
 Puust, Lilian 19  
  
 Racėnas, Rimvydas 76, 77, 81, 82, 89  
 Radstone, Susannah 158  
 Rahi-Tamm, Aigi 10, 19  
 Rasma, Aizupe 31–32, 44  
 Raun, Toivo U. 19  
 Razgon, Lev 62  
 Reiber, Alfred J. 14, 15  
 Reinisch, Jessica 15  
 Reitlinger, Gerard 17  
 Riaubienė, Margarita 233, 234  
 Ricoeur, Paul 112, 114  
 Rindzevičiūtė, Eglė 5, 24, 25, 153, 155, 165



- Ronis, Indulis 33, 45  
 Rousevelt, Franklin D. 15  
 Rozentāle, Anita 36, 45  
 Rupas, V. 123
- Saja, Kazys 116, 127  
 Saleniece, Irēna 39, 40, 42, 44  
 Salo, Velo 15  
 Samalavičius, Almantas 90, 91, 103  
 Sambrooke, Jerilyn 5, 22, 90, 108  
 Samodurov, Dr. 84, 99  
 Senn, Alfred 13, 107  
 Sepetys, Ruta 177  
 Serov, I. 52  
 Shtromas, Aleksandras 124  
 Siljak, Ana 14, 15  
 Sims, James E. 204, 208  
 Simsons, Jānis 31–32, 45  
 Sirutavičienė, O. 84  
 Sirutienė, O. 81  
 Skinke, Iveta 70  
 Skučas, Antanas 64  
 Skultans, Vieda 18–19, 43, 44, 45, 178, 209  
 Slara, Agita 180, 208  
 Smelser, Neil J. 72  
 Smetona, Antanas 221  
 Smith, Antony D. 179, 191, 207, 209  
 Smith, David J. 139, 155, 179  
 Smolskutė, Žaneta 139, 140, 142  
 Sniečkus, Antanas 125  
 Snyder, Timothy 14, 16, 155  
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksander 129, 153, 154, 174  
 Spargo, R. C. 10  
 Sruoga, Balys 174  
 Sruoginis, Laima 94, 99, 103  
 Stalin, Joseph 14, 15, 92, 121, 123, 126, 137, 142, 145, 146, 155, 183, 185, 206, 225  
 Star, Susan Leigh 158  
 Staris, Alfrēds 38, 45  
 Stark, Meinhard 20  
 Stephens, Ojārs 45  
 Stibbe, Matthew 34, 45
- Stiver Lie, Suzanne 137  
 Strazds, Kārlis 31, 45  
 Strods, Heinrichs 45  
 Stulgienė, Elena 48, 68  
 Suleiman, Susan R. 11  
 Sundholm, John 157  
 Sztompka, Piotr 72
- Šakenis, Konstantinas 171  
 Šalaka, Romas 73  
 Šapoka, Alfredas 111  
 Šilde, Ādolfs 45  
 Širka, Mr. 53  
 Špakauskienė, Irena 164  
 Štarienė 56  
 Šukienė, Ona 221, 233, 234  
 Šukys, Antanas 220  
 Šukys, Julija 2, 25, 218  
 Šulskytė, Aldona 69, 115, 128  
 Šutinienė, Irena 19, 73, 74
- Taagepera, Rein 139  
 Ther, Philipp 14, 15  
 Tilindis, J. 80, 81  
 Tyla, Antanas 52, 132  
 Truska, Liudas 111, 116, 130
- Ulčinskas, Vladas 73, 77, 79  
 Ulmanis, Guntis 12  
 Ulmanis, Kārlis 33, 45, 214  
 Ūpīte, Rūta 31–32, 45  
 Urbšys, Juozas 110  
 Uzzell, D. L. 204, 209
- Vaičiūnaitė, Judita 79, 116  
 Vaitekūnas, L. 123  
 Vaitkevičius, A. 84  
 Vajeiks, Artūrs 211–213  
 Vajeiks, Biruta 216  
 Valančius, Motiejus 116  
 Valenta-Ožys, Adolfas 140  
 Vaškelis, Gytis 25  
 Veisaitė, Irena 12  
 Vėlius, Norbertas 134

- Velmet, Aro 5, 24, 25, 169, 178  
 Venclova, Tomas 107, 116  
 Venskevičienė, Albina 73, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 89  
 Vertulienė, A. 169  
 Viburytė, Laima 59  
 Vielius, Vytautas 168  
 Viksne, Rudite 34, 45  
 Vilensky, Semyon S. 20  
 Viliūnas, Giedrius 110  
 Vilkaitis, Arvydas 56  
 Vitkevičienė, Marija 126  
 Vydria, M. M. 69  
 Walsh, K. 186, 209  
 Waxman, Zoë 10  
 Weiner, Amir 126  
 Weiner, Myron 48  
 Weiss-Wendt, Anton 189, 210  
 Werner-Müller, Jan 157  
 Wertch, James V. 142  
 White, Elizabeth 15  
 Williams, Gareth 117  
 Williams, P. 210  
 Wilmer, Frank 48  
 Woodward, K. 195, 210  
 Zālīte, Indulis 33, 45  
 Zander, Ulf 158, 159, 205, 208  
 Zemskov, Vladimir N. 48, 51  
 Žeglienė 53, 54  
 Žemaitytė, Aldona 46, 48, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59, 61, 63, 64, 66, 68  
 Žukas, Saulius 117  
 Žukauskas, Albinas 116



*Printed by*

UAB „Petro ofsetas“

Savanorių pr. 174D, LT-03153 Vilnius

Website: [www.petroofsetas.lt](http://www.petroofsetas.lt)







As a result, the authors have provided a detailed and extensive list of references for further study. It is hoped that the book will be a useful addition to general teacher education. The authors believe, however, that the book is not intended to be a one-stop guide. Rather, it is intended to be a starting point for further study and research.

While some of the authors are experienced researchers, others are first-time researchers. The book is a collection of research reports and articles that have been published in the past five years. The authors have chosen to include research that is relevant to the field of education. The book is intended to be a starting point for further study and research. The authors believe that the book will be a useful addition to general teacher education. The authors believe, however, that the book is not intended to be a one-stop guide. Rather, it is intended to be a starting point for further study and research.

APPENDIX B  
Research Summary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1047 1048 1049 1050 1051 1052 1053 1054 1055 1056 1057 1058 1059 1060 1061 1062 1063 1064 1065 1066 1067 1068 1069 1070 1071 1072 1073 1074 1075 1076 1077 1078 1079 1080 1081 1082 1083 1084 1085 1086 1087 1088 1089 1090 1091 1092 1093 1094 1095 1096 1097 1098 1099 1100 1101 1102 1103 1104 1105 1106 1107 1108 1109 1110 1111 1112 1113 1114 1115 1116 1117 1118 1119 1120 1121 1122 1123 1124 1125 1126 1127 1128 1129 1130 1131 1132 1133 1134 1135 1136 1137 1138 1139 1140 1141 1142 1143 1144 1145 1146 1147 1148 1149 1150 1151 1152 1153 1154 1155 1156 1157 1158 1159 1160 1161 1162 1163 1164 1165 1166 1167 1168 1169 1170 1171 1172 1173 1174 1175 1176 1177 1178 1179 1180 1181 1182 1183 1184 1185 1186 1187 1188 1189 1190 1191 1192 1193 1194 1195 1196 1197 1198 1199 1200 1201 1202 1203 1204 1205 1206 1207 1208 1209 1210 1211 1212 1213 1214 1215 1216 1217 1218 1219 1220 1221 1222 1223 1224 1225 1226 1227 1228 1229 1230 1231 1232 1233 1234 1235 1236 1237 1238 1239 1240 1241 1242 1243 1244 1245 1246 1247 1248 1249 1250 1251 1252 1253 1254 1255 1256 1257 1258 1259 1260 1261 1262 1263 1264 1265 1266 1267 1268 1269 1270 1271 1272 1273 1274 1275 1276 1277 1278 1279 1280 1281 1282 1283 1284 1285 1286 1287 1288 1289 1290 1291 1292 1293 1294 1295 1296 1297 1298 1299 1300 1301 1302 1303 1304 1305 1306 1307 1308 1309 1310 1311 1312 1313 1314 1315 1316 1317 1318 1319 1320 1321 1322 1323 1324 1325 1326 1327 1328 1329 1330 1331 1332 1333 1334 1335 1336 1337 1338 1339 1340 1341 1342 1343 1344 1345 1346 1347 1348 1349 1350 1351 1352 1353 1354 1355 1356 1357 1358 1359 1360 1361 1362 1363 1364 1365 1366 1367 1368 1369 1370 1371 1372 1373 1374 1375 1376 1377 1378 1379 1380 1381 1382 1383 1384 1385 1386 1387 1388 1389 1390 1391 1392 1393 1394 1395 1396 1397 1398 1399 1400 1401 1402 1403 1404 1405 1406 1407 1408 1409 1410 1411 1412 1413 1414 1415 1416 1417 1418 1419 1420 1421 1422 1423 1424 1425 1426 1427 1428 1429 1430 1431 1432 1433 1434 1435 1436 1437 1438 1439 1440 1441 1442 1443 1444 1445 1446 1447 1448 1449 1450 1451 1452 1453 1454 1455 1456 1457 1458 1459 1460 1461 1462 1463 1464 1465 1466 1467 1468 1469 1470 1471 1472 1473 1474 1475 1476 1477 1478 1479 1480 1481 1482 1483 1484 1485 1486 1487 1488 1489 1490 1491 1492 1493 1494 1495 1496 1497 1498 1499 1500 1501 1502 1503 1504 1505 1506 1507 1508 1509 1510 1511 1512 1513 1514 1515 1516 1517 1518 1519 1520 1521 1522 1523 1524 1525 1526 1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545 1546 1547 1548 1549 1550 1551 1552 1553 1554 1555 1556 1557 1558 1559 1560 1561 1562 1563 1564 1565 1566 1567 1568 1569 1570 1571 1572 1573 1574 1575 1576 1577 1578 1579 1580 1581 1582 1583 1584 1585 1586 1587 1588 1589 1590 1591 1592 1593 1594 1595 1596 1597 1598 1599 1600 1601 1602 1603 1604 1605 1606 1607 1608 1609 1610 1611 1612 1613 1614 1615 1616 1617 1618 1619 1620 1621 1622 1623 1624 1625 1626 1627 1628 1629 1630 1631 1632 1633 1634 1635 1636 1637 1638 1639 1640 1641 1642 1643 1644 1645 1646 1647 1648 1649 1650 1651 1652 1653 1654 1655 1656 1657 1658 1659 1660 1661 1662 1663 1664 1665 1666 1667 1668 1669 1670 1671 1672 1673 1674 1675 1676 1677 1678 1679 1680 1681 1682 1683 1684 1685 1686 1687 1688 1689 1690 1691 1692 1693 1694 1695 1696 1697 1698 1699 1700 1701 1702 1703 1704 1705 1706 1707 1708 1709 1710 1711 1712 1713 1714 1715 1716 1717 1718 1719 1720 1721 1722 1723 1724 1725 1726 1727 1728 1729 1730 1731 1732 1733 1734 1735 1736 1737 1738 1739 1740 1741 1742 1743 1744 1745 1746 1747 1748 1749 1750 1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758 1759 1760 1761 1762 1763 1764 1765 1766 1767 1768 1769 1770 1771 1772 1773 1774 1775 1776 1777 1778 1779 1780 1781 1782 1783 1784 1785 1786 1787 1788 1789 1790 1791 1792 1793 1794 1795 1796 1797 1798 1799 1800 1801 1802 1803 1804 1805 1806 1807 1808 1809 1810 1811 1812 1813 1814 1815 1816 1817 1818 1819 1820 1821 1822 1823 1824 1825 1826 1827 1828 1829 1830 1831 1832 1833 1834 1835 1836 1837 1838 1839 1840 1841 1842 1843 1844 1845 1846 1847 1848 1849 1850 1851 1852 1853 1854 1855 1856 1857 1858 1859 1860 1861 1862 1863 1864 1865 1866 1867 1868 1869 1870 1871 1872 1873 1874 1875 1876 1877 1878 1879 1880 1881 1882 1883 1884 1885 1886 1887 1888 1889 1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895 1896 1897 1898 1899 1900 1901 1902 1903 1904 1905 1906 1907 1908 1909 1910 1911 1912 1913 1914 1915 1916 1917 1918 1919 1920 1921 1922 1923 1924 1925 1926 1927 1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039 2040 2041 2042 2043 2044 2045 2046 2047 2048 2049 2050 2051 2052 2053 2054 2055 2056 2057 2058 2059 2060 2061 2062 2063 2064 2065 2066 2067 2068 2069 2070 2071 2072 2073 2074 2075 2076 2077 2078 2079 2080 2081 2082 2083 2084 2085 2086 2087 2088 2089 2090 2091 2092 2093 2094 2095 2096 2097 2098 2099 2100 2101 2102 2103 2104 2105 2106 2107 2108 2109 2110 2111 2112 2113 2114 2115 2116 2117 2118 2119 2120 2121 2122 2123 2124 2125 2126 2127 2128 2129 2130 2131 2132 2133 2134 2135 2136 2137 2138 2139 2140 2141 2142 2143 2144 2145 2146 2147 2148 2149 2150 2151 2152 2153 2154 2155 2156 2157 2158 2159 2160 2161 2162 2163 2164 2165 2166 2167 2168 2169 2170 2171 2172 2173 2174 2175 2176 2177 2178 2179 2180 2181 2182 2183 2184 2185 2186 2187 2188 2189 2190 2191 2192 2193 2194 2195 2196 2197 2198 2199 2200 2201 2202 2203 2204 2205 2206 2207 2208 2209 2210 2211 2212 2213 2214 2215 2216 2217 2218 2219 2220 2221 2222 2223 2224 2225 2226 2227 2228 2229 2230 2231 2232 2233 2234 2235 2236 2237 2238 2239 2240 2241 2242 2243 2244 2245 2246 2247 2248 2249 2250 2251 2252 2253 2254 2255 2256 2257 2258 2259 2260 2261 2262 2263 2264 2265 2266 2267 2268 2269 2270 2271 2272 2273 2274 2275 2276 2277 2278 2279 2280 2281 2282 2283 2284 2285 2286 2287 2288 2289 2290 2291 2292 2293 2294 2295 2296 2297 2298 2299 2300 2301 2302 2303 2304 2305 2306 2307 2308 2309 2310 2311 2312 2313 2314 2315 2316 2317 2318 2319 2320 2321 2322 2323 2324 2325 2326 2327 2328 2329 2330 2331 2332 2333 2334 2335 2336 2337 2338 2339 2340 2341 2342 2343 2344 2345 2346 2347 2348 2349 2350 2351 2352 2353 2354 2355 2356 2357 2358 2359 2360 2361 2362 2363 2364 2365 2366 2367 2368 2369 2370 2371 2372 2373 2374 2375 2376 2377 2378 2379 2380 2381 2382 2383 2384 2385 2386 2387 2388 2389 2390 2391 2392 2393 2394 2395 2396 2397 2398 2399 2400 2401 2402 2403 2404 2405 2406 2407 2408 2409 2410 2411 2412 2413 2414 2415 2416 2417 2418 2419 2420 2421 2422 2423 2424 2425 2426 2427 2428 2429 2430 2431 2432 2433 2434 2435 2436 2437 2438 2439 2440 2441 2442 2443 2444 2445 2446 2447 2448 2449 2450 2451 2452 2453 2454 2455 2456 2457 2458 2459 2460 2461 2462 2463 2464 2465 2466 2467 2468 2469 2470 2471 2472 2473 2474 2475 2476 2477 2478 2479 2480 2481 2482 2483 2484 2485 2486 2487 2488 2489 2490 2491 2492 2493 2494 2495 2496 2497 2498 2499 2500 2501 2502 2503 2504 2505 2506 2507 2508 2509 2510 2511 2512 2513 2514 2515 2516 2517 2518 2519 2520 2521 2522 2523 2524 2525 2526 2527 2528 2529 2530 2531 2532 2533 2534 2535 2536 2537 2538 2539 2540 2541 2542 2543 2544 2545 2546 2547 2548 2549 2550 2551 2552 2553 2554 2555 2556 2557 2558 2559 2560 2561 2562 2563 2564 2565 2566 2567 2568 2569 2570 2571 2572 2573 2574 2575 2576 2577 2578 2579 2580 2581 2582 2583 2584 2585 2586 2587 2588 2589 2590 2591 2592 2593 2594 2595 2596 2597 2598 2599 2600 2601 2602 2603 2604 2605 2606 2607 2608 2609 2610 2611 2612 2613 2614 2615 2616 2617 2618 2619 2620 2621 2622 2623 2624 2625 2626 2627 2628 2629 2630 2631 2632 2633 2634 2